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By Tina Rosenberg

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

FOUNDED 1914 — *A Weekly Journal of Opinion* — ISSUE 3,810

WASHINGTON, D.C. — JANUARY 25, 1988

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THE NEW REPUBLIC, Vol. 198, Number 4, Issue 3,810, January 25, 1988. (Printed in the U.S. on January 6, 1988.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated Jan. 4 & 11, July 18 & 25, Aug. 8 & 15, and Sept. 12 & 19, 1988) at 1220 19th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036. Telephone (202) 331-7494. Leadership Network advertising (212) 684-5500. Yearly subscriptions, $56; foreign, $81; Canada, $70. Back issues, $2.50 (includes postage & handling).

©1988 by The New Republic, Inc.

(ISSN 0028-6583). Second-class postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. Available on microfilm from University Microfilms Intnl., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106 and Bell & Howell, Old Mansfield Road, Wooster, OH 44691. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. **Subscribers:** Please send all remittances, changes of address, and subscription inquiries to **Subscription Service Dept., The New Republic, P.O. Box 56515, Boulder, CO 80322.** For subscription problems call **800-525-0643.**

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TRB®

FROM WASHINGTON

How Quickly They Forget

In New York they're rioting over seven-dollar movie tickets. At the carryout next to my office, a large coffee just went from 55 cents to 60 cents. In case you hadn't noticed, inflation is back. The comfortable assumption that the price you pay tomorrow will be the price you paid yesterday—a comfort we thought we'd lost forever, then quickly started taking for granted again—is fading once more.

At about four-and-a-half percent, inflation is already higher than the rate that panicked President Nixon into slapping on wage and price controls in 1971. The outlook for this year is cloudy; another oil price collapse may save us. But one way or another, 1988 is the year the bill comes in for the Reagan free lunch. And one thing we're going to have to decide is how badly we want to avoid another serious bout of currency erosion.

The debate over interest rates, exchange rates, money supply, deficits, and so on is usually framed in terms of threading a path between the risks of recession and inflation. But this technical argument hides a sterner moral dilemma. The nostrums for recession are generally pleasant (loose money, bigger deficits) while the nostrums for inflation are painful (tight money, smaller deficits). The hidden question usually is how much nasty medicine we have to take, and someone always has a fancy explanation why we don't need to take any at all.

Throughout the early 1980s, the conservative supply-siders excoriated Federal Reserve Chairman Paul Volcker and pointed to the plummeting price of gold as evidence that money should be looser, even as deficits skyrocketed as well. In the past two years, gold has gone up by almost half. The honest supply-siders have conceded that the party cannot go on forever. The dishonest ones, who style themselves "populist conservatives," have come up with ever-more-convoluted justifications for another drink or two.

The self-styled populists of the right are now being joined by self-styled populists of the left with a far more straightforward argument: inflation is good. That is the oft-repeated message of William Greider's big new book on the Federal Reserve, *Secrets of the Temple* (Simon and Schuster). The argument has a distinguished pedigree, dating back to the populist era of the 19th century and especially to William Jennings Bryan's famous "Cross of Gold" speech (1896).

It goes like this. Wealth is highly concentrated. Creditors are rich; borrowers are poor. Inflation, by eroding the value of debt, therefore takes from the few and gives to the many, like Robin Hood. The inflation of the 1970s was actually good for most Americans, especially those who owned houses with mortgages. "A social philosopher, searching for a progressive theory of justice, might contemplate the underlying consequences of inflation and conclude that this system was a promising model of social equity."

The biggest debtor of all, of course, is the federal government. This year interest payments on the federal debt will exceed the budget deficit. In other words, the government will actually be running a surplus, except for payments on past deficits. As we search for ways out of the box Reagan-era profligacy has put us in, backdoor repudiation of the debt through inflation will be increasingly tempting.

Right-wing pseudo-populists have no explanation why anyone would wish to inflict fiscal or monetary discipline on society. They make it seem like pure sadism. Their left-wing allies at least have a coherent theory: class warfare. The Fed protects the interests of the rich. But inflation is hardly a progressive panacea, for four reasons.

First, it's far from clear who wins and who loses. This isn't 1896. Much if not most financial wealth in this country is held by institutions on behalf of ordinary people: their savings, life insurance, and pensions. Life insurance and pension rights are generally not indexed, and so they evaporate with inflation. If unionized workers and others with market power keep up with inflation, poorer workers and those on welfare generally don't. Homeowners beat inflation, but—precisely because of this—homes are getting out of reach for the poor and lower middle class.

Second, inflation—even if it staves off recession in the short run—is disastrous for economic growth in the long run, which is the only true recipe for general prosperity. It encourages consumption, borrowing, and short-term profit-taking; discourages saving and long-term investment. Just coping with a sinking currency is a vast and costly distraction for the economy.

Third, inflation carries high political and spiritual costs. Doesn't anyone remember the late 1970s? That sour mood, that feeling of vertigo, the sense that everything was falling apart, the bitter politics of group against group were caused in large part by the collapse of the currency and the desperate search for protection from it.

Many of our current troubles, in fact, are a hangover from the inflation era. Fear of its return has kept long-term real interest rates at record highs. And yet our savings rate remains abysmal, because Americans never recovered the habit of thrift. The thing-obsessed yuppies who matured in the late 1970s never learned it. In fact, the general "me first" attitude of the 1980s that progressives rightly deplore, because it stands in the way of social consensus and compassion, has some of its roots in the culture of inflation.

In any event (reason No. 4) the trick of redistributing wealth through inflation won't work the next time around. Public and private debt only erodes if inflation exceeds the interest rate being paid. Otherwise, the debt compounds faster than it loses value. In the 1970s ten percent inflation merrily melted away five percent mortgages. In the 1980s it would take 20 percent inflation to melt away ten percent mortgages.

And precisely because of past inflation, interest rates are now on a much shorter fuse. Adjustable mortgages and floating-rate money-market funds make inflation leapfrog a harder game to play. "What the economy most needs," writes Greider in the *Washington Post*, "is rising prices and lower interest rates." But we can't have rising prices and lower interest rates anymore. Rising prices will immediately produce higher interest rates. The suckers have caught on.

The victory over inflation was the greatest public policy achievement of the past decade, and possibly the most costly. Squandering it would be criminal.

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STAYING TRIM, RUNNING LEAN.

Once the world leader in most manufacturing and service sectors, America is steadily losing ground. Our international competitors have borrowed and improved upon our technology, outpaced our productivity, and cut into our market share.

In 1960, the United States produced almost half of the world's automobiles. Today we command less than a quarter of the global market. Similar declines have been recorded in metals, machine tools, pharmaceuticals, semiconductors, computers, and other industries.

RESTRUCTURING FOR EFFICIENCY.

To reverse this trend, many American corporations are springing into action. In a massive wave of restructuring, they're streamlining their operations, weeding out unproductive assets, and trimming bureaucratic waste. Companies burdened by excessive diversification are divesting unrelated subsidiaries and returning to the core businesses they understand and manage best.

In the face of intense global competition, many corporations have learned the importance of staying trim and and running lean. Today's managers are also finding new ways to secure more efficient access to the capital markets in order to obtain long-term "patient" capital. This allows companies to compete more effectively in the global marketplace over the long-term.

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While high yield bonds have been a source of considerable misunderstanding, their issuers are achieving impressive results. Over the last three years, the 1,200 companies that have issued fixed-income securities rated less than investment grade have increased their revenues 32%, growing much faster than investment grade companies (12%). During the same period, the country's less than 800 investment grade companies lost 4% of their jobs, while high yield issuers increased employment by 24%.

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CORRESPONDENCE

HELP WANTED

To the editors:
"The Jobs Conundrum" (November 30) overlooked a vast human resource pool of well-located, good workers who have valuable skills and a desire to work. They have, however, often been told that they must retire and are no longer needed as productive members of our society. Current research shows that this is not true: older and mature persons are a good investment. According to the American Association of Retired Persons, workers 50 and older stay with the company longer, are good with people, have fewer sick days, have good basic educational skills, and believe in the work ethic. In addition, the older person wants to work in order to feel useful. With the "graying of America" there are fewer younger people to fill jobs, but there are more productive older people available than ever before.

SUE HARTENBAUM
Pacific Palisades, California

To the editors:
I loved the proposal that corporations start their own schools as an alternative to the public schools. But TNR doesn't finish the picture. Today more and more U.S. corporations are being bought by foreigners. Under your scenario, foreign takeovers of our corporations would also lead to the takeover of our schools. The result? In a single city we might find some schools operating under the Japanese system, some adopting the British system, some the French, and some the good ol' American system. And we'd have, for the first time, a genuine competitive laboratory to evaluate which system of teaching performs best in our society.

DAVID MORRIS
St. Paul, Minnesota

ANYTHING BUT VULGAR

To the editors:
I have been a faithful reader for years, but must register astonishment at something TRB wrote comparing Donald Trump to Mikhail Gorbachev ("Two Deal-Makers," December 28). Is it your actual knowledge that leads to the opinion you offer of Ivana Trump as "a vulgar social-climbing wife"? This is really unfair because I believe it isn't true. I know Mrs. Trump well and she is anything *but* vulgar or social-climbing. This is a true life partner who has accepted and loves her husband, right or wrong. She works 18 hours a day running one of his casinos in Atlantic City. She wears clothes by Givenchy and Yves St. Laurent, it is true, but they are not vulgar. They are the same clothes worn by other rich women. She is an athlete and a former Olympic ski champion. She speaks at least four languages.

In my opinion Mrs. Trump is not interested in social climbing. She is interested in work. Indeed, you have misjudged both of the Trumps; neither has the slightest idea that they *need* to climb. They are being pursued by the crème de la crème of New York society as if they were the sleigh and society the wolves. Everybody wants the Trumps and everybody invites them and asks them for money for charities because they have money and power. The usual New York high hypocrisy and bullshit is going down all around them, but they don't bother to be a part of it. They have it all. They aren't climbing. They have *arrived!*

LIZ SMITH
(New York) Daily News
New York, New York

EXAMINING GORBO'S PROFS

To the editors:
Jacques Rupnik's "Gorbachev's Profs" (December 7) was very disappointing. No doubt, one reason was that I hated to be reminded that a decade ago I was "young and promising" and then told that the generation of the 1960s has taken over Soviet studies when I am in the generation of the 1950s. But the real problem is Rupnik's failure to understand that we of the older generation today are as sharply divided as were the older generations of the past. Many do think that Reagan has harmed Gorbachev's reforms, but I believe that the president has helped him by providing the present foil—SDI—to tie reform to the cause of national defense. Stephen Cohen believes that Bukharin and the NEP of the 1920s represented the essence of Leninism, while I call Lenin the xenophobic Khomeini of Russian history and see Stalin as his natural heir. Yet perhaps for that reason I see Gorbachev as more radical in opening Russia to the West—really repudiating the essence of the revolution—than does Cohen, let alone others of our generation who basically agree with Adam Ulam's doubts about the meaningfulness of *glasnost*. We will never understand Gorbachev until we begin to treat seriously the issues in our debates about him.

JERRY F. HOUGH
Durham, North Carolina

FOLLOWING THE LEADERS

To the editors:
Edward Luttwak ought to concede that *The Mask of Command*, far from "abjuring the systematic analysis," contains a very highly structured thesis ("Ranking Generals," November 30): that the exercise of authority rests ultimately on the sanction of force. This is not original, but the effort to see how force has been used in different societies to validate authority is an original one. In brief, I argue that the exercise of force entails risk, because force evokes resistance, and that leaders who impose risk on followers must, if it is to be borne until an end is achieved, either be seen to share it—the heroic principle—or else dissimulate. My four exemplars, Alexander, Wellington, Grant, Hitler, were chosen precisely because the first incarnated the heroic principle, while the other three dissimulated in sharply different and socially significant ways. Wellington, as the servant of a constitutional monarchy, eschewed the heroic personality—which properly belonged in an attenuated form to his master—but nevertheless took heroic risks. Grant, the servant of democracy, a society that is by definition unheroic, eschewed both risk and personality cult. Hitler, who practiced politics as an exercise in risk taking, simulated a heroic personality that his objective behavior validated in no way at all.

There are other means of dealing with the risk problem. But if Mr. Luttwak reviews the forms of political and social organization known to the West and tries them against my four categories, I will be surprised if he finds one that escapes. Since categorization is what "systematic analysis" is about, his criticism seems therefore misplaced.

JOHN KEEGAN
Wiltshire, England

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
JANUARY 25, 1988

BORDERLINE ECONOMICS

Ronald Reagan's macroeconomic chickens keep circling and threatening to roost with a mighty thud. Last year's stock market crash was a scary swoop, but the economy has remained aloft. Now we are in the midst of a dollar crash that the Federal Reserve and other central banks are trying to stop by spending vast amounts of money to buy dollars and keep their value up. If that doesn't work, the United States will face the danger that foreigners will stop lending us money at current interest rates to finance our huge trade and budget deficits. Then the Fed may have to raise interest rates and risk a recession. The dollar's fall also creates the danger of inflation—indeed, the price of gold is rising, which many take to be the signal that inflation is already resurging. That's another reason interest rates may rise, threatening recession. Nowhere on the horizon are developments that might scatter Reagan's chickens: the restoration of fiscal balance in this country and coordinated movement for economic expansion in Europe and Asia that will keep the world economy growing.

That's the gloomy big picture, and the Reagan administration is to blame for creating and sustaining it—with its budget deficits and failure to create an environment for real private-sector growth and trade competitiveness. Yet everything the administration does on the economic front is not wrong. Although it has failed to solve the nation's domestic and global problems, it has just done two good things on the borders: sign a free-trade agreement with Canada and support a debt-relief plan for Mexico.

The Canadian trade agreement falls far short of the North American common market that candidate Ronald Reagan proposed in the 1980 presidential campaign, and it has been a long time coming. Yet it is beneficial to both the United States and Canada, and it sends a powerful signal at a time when protectionist sentiment is rising here at home and new talks (the GATT's "Uruguay Round") are under way on the rules for world trade. The United States and Canada currently exchange more goods and services than any two nations in the world—close to $150 billion per year (versus $122 billion between the United States and Japan). By committing themselves to eliminate virtually all tariffs and curtail sharply other restrictions on trade and investment over a ten-year period, the United States and Canada are demonstrating dedication to the principle, currently under challenge everywhere, that free trade encourages prosperity.

The principle is correct too, as the U.S. Commerce Department demonstrated in a study last year showing that the agreement would boost trade by $25 billion over a five-year period and create 14,000 new American manufacturing jobs in areas such as machinery, textiles, clothing, paper, and furniture. Canadian studies indicate that there will be parallel employment gains there—and a boost in GNP of between two percent and five percent—but this is not accepted by opposition politicians, businessmen in obsolete and protected industries, some trade union leaders, and nationalists who perpetually fear cultural and economic domination by the United States.

These interests, doubting Canada's ability to compete in free trade, are organizing opposition to parliamentary ratification and are seeking repudiation of the pact if they defeat Conservative Prime Minister Brian Mulroney in Canada's next elections this year or next. Ratification by the U.S. Congress seems assured, but Congress could contribute to the defeat of the pact in Canada if it passes a protectionist omnibus trade bill or delays ratification of the Canadian agreement in order to create a hostage and prevent a veto of the trade bill. One piece of good news in the current economic statistics is that U.S. exports rose by 20 percent in 1987 and now account for more than half the current U.S. growth rate. This means that whatever political excuse there might have been for protectionism in the past, it's passed.

The U.S.-Mexican debt relief plan will have less dramatic economic effects than the Canada pact—Mexico's annual debt service, currently $7 billion, could fall by between $500 million and $1 billion—but still it represents a creative conceptual breakthrough and a welcome reversal of Reagan administration policy. At last, Treasury Secretary James Baker has accepted the idea that Third World debts can be forgiven—in other words, that the banks whose irresponsible loans created this crisis must contribute to a solution. This position has been long recommended by Senator Bill Bradley and other Democrats.

The Mexico plan involves an ingenious scheme invented by officials of the Morgan Guaranty Trust Co. and the Mexican Finance Ministry whereby the U.S. Treasury will

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create special zero-coupon bonds worth $10 billion at maturity in 20 years, which Mexico can buy now for $2 billion. These bonds will serve as collateral for a new issue of Mexican bonds for which banks can trade in their old Mexican IOUs. The new bonds will be auctioned: the more loss a bank is willing to accept on the old debt it holds, the more higher-interest new bonds it will receive. Experts figure that the banks will be willing to take discounts of between 40 percent and 50 percent on their loans, meaning that Mexico can reduce its overall debt to the United States (currently $78 billion) by between $6 billion and $10 billion. The whole deal will cost U.S. taxpayers nothing.

This arrangement works for Mexico because, unlike other big debtor countries such as Brazil and Argentina, it has built up cash reserves and can afford to buy the U.S. bonds. For the plan to be adaptable to other debtors, someone else would have to come up with a bankroll—perhaps the World Bank or Japan.

There are other hitches too. Mexico's government has courageously imposed austerity measures to reduce government spending, liberalize trade, and encourage private investment. Its economic problems are still monumental, especially inflation, but its export earnings now are growing rapidly and it is a worthy partner for the kind of debt relief plan that Bradley has been advocating for several years.

Argentina, Brazil, and Peru, however, have not engaged in any of the economic reforms that Mexico has undertaken. Perhaps when their newly installed democratic governments first took power, it would have been possible to work out a Bradley plan for debt relief and domestic economic reform. That opportunity was lost because the Rea-

THE ZEITGEIST CHECKLIST

BY CHARLES PAUL FREUND

This Week		Last Week	Weeks on Chart
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2.	FORTY YEARS WANDERING	1	2
3.	BRAIN-DRAINED	*	3
4.	INFREQUENT FLYERS	*	2
5.	RIDER ON THE STORM	2	6
6.	KHOSTBUSTERS	—	1
7.	CREAMED PUFFERS	*	9
8.	DEATH TAINTS A HOLIDAY	—	1
9.	TEAPOT DOPE	—	1
10.	SEVEN DEADLY DOLLARS	—	1

1. THE GOSPEL OF LUCRE

Economy. Economics a dismal science? Not lately. Dollar down? Great! Exports are up and the trade balance is improved. Dollar up? Confidence climbs and Wall Street's happy. Dow slipping? The system is righting itself. Dow up? Hey, I'm OK, you're OK. Unemployment at six percent? Full employment at last. Recession? Well, sure, but maybe it'll come *after* the election.

2. FORTY YEARS WANDERING

Gaza. The longer the Gaza story lasts, the more the Palestinian story—as represented in the U.S. media—will change. Arafat no longer fits into the increasingly sympathetic approach. The focus is shifting to such figures as Edward Said here and Mubarak Awad there. Efforts to silence the PLO in the U.S. encourage such a shift by removing its bloody associations from the debate.

3. BRAIN-DRAINED

National ignorance. Determining the level of American ignorance is a national pastime. But when it comes to addressing students who cannot locate the Pacific, the culture has hamstrung itself. *Sputnik* impelled the last educational scramble. But the solution then—accelerated tracks—is now considered elitist. This choice—education or egalitarianism—is both false and self-destructive.

4. INFREQUENT FLYERS

Space. The combination of yet more shuttle failure and yet more Soviet space success caused little reaction. Americans who lived through the Space Race will never be indifferent to Space, but their depoliticized expectations are remarkably low. This may change; the U.S. faces humiliation. Somebody—the Soviets?—will eventually have to launch replacement U.S. satellites. By the way, socialist shortwave services are crowing.

5. RIDER ON THE STORM

Hart. A tentative backlash against the vilification of Gary Hart has appeared: an op-ed defense, a prediction of lasting strength, even the notion that his re-entry was less treasonous than clever. Hart's rivals, who have done little with their opportunity thus far, get a major chance in the January 15 debate, but on his turf. He's much better on TV than they are.

6. KHOSTBUSTERS

Battle of Khost. However long the siege of Khost lasts, Afghan rebels have won an important battle, a psychological Dien Bien Phu. The Soviets have apparently made the kind of firepower miscalculation that has marked U.S. actions. Even if it is their strategy to declare victory and get out once the Khost highway is reopened, a question remains. Why did the Soviets choose to report Khost in detail in their own media?

7. CREAMED PUFFERS

Smoking. Was the revolt aboard TWA Flight 853 a smokers' equivalent of the Stonewall incident that kicked off the gay rights movement? Will it stiffen the spines of on-the-run puffers elsewhere? Even if it was a final rearguard gasp, it had one interesting result: many non-smokers expressed sympathy for smokers who held out for five hours. With the appearance of moderates in the debate, the intensity of the anti-smoking spasm may have peaked.

8. DEATH TAINTS A HOLIDAY

Mass murders. The Arkansas killings have occasioned a review of mass murders. These have a surprisingly short history; many date the phenomenon from the Speck murders in 1966, and believe they are increasing. The social factors often involved—social isolation, personal frustration, job loss, divorce—point to even more such events in the future.

9. TEAPOT DOPE

Reagan's farewell tour. Deaver's problems, Meese's problems, Iranamok, and perhaps 100 other such problems have coalesced into a late line on the Reagan presidency: it may be the most corrupt since Harding's. No, since Grant's. No, ever. This isn't really sticking yet, certainly not to an irrelevant Reagan. But it's kicking around, and is likely to become an issue for a nominated Bush.

10. SEVEN DEADLY DOLLARS

Movie prices. The rise in the cost of movie tickets to seven bucks in New York has sparked demonstrations and the threat of a Koch-led boycott. New York's rise also upped ticket prices a notch in other cities. Of course, with cheap tapes and all-movie cable around, it makes a lot of sense for exhibitors to gouge customers, or didn't these guys ever hear of cocooning?

*Item resurfaces in the Zeitgeist after at least one week's absence.

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gan administration, under the Baker plan, insisted that all debts had to be paid or else banks would never make new loans. In fact, banks made few new loans anyway, debt service rose, and, finally, the new democratic regimes came under popular pressure to drop difficult economic reforms and stop paying their debts. Two debtor countries that do pay their bills—Mexico and Chile—are not democracies.

Now that James Baker has partly come around to the ideas of Bill Bradley, perhaps it's not too late for this administration, the World Bank, and Japan to make a new offer of debt relief for economic reform. And the administration should use its success with Canada to promote a wider free trade regime in the world. But worthy as debt relief and free trade are as objectives, they could be sabotaged in a world recession brought on by higher American interest rates. The administration has done good work on its borders. Now it has to deal as creatively with the key problem at the center—that is, in Washington.

NOTEBOOK

□ 'TWAS THE NIGHT before Christmas, or nearly so, and all through the House and Senate our elected leaders were desperate to get home. Senator Ernest Hollings seized the opportunity to slip a pet amendment into the gigantic catchall spending bill. Nobody noticed until after the bill had been signed into law. Hollings's amendment orders the Federal Communications Commission not to abandon its so-called "cross-ownership" rule, which basically forbids companies from owning a television station and a newspaper in the same city. The senator has admitted that his target was Rupert Murdoch, who was hoping to avoid having to sell the *New York Post* and the *Boston Herald* after buying TV stations in those cities. Hollings's particular concern was the *Herald*, which under Murdoch has been less than friendly to Massachusetts Senators John Kerry and Edward Kennedy, both Democrats like Hollings. This episode illustrates the absurdity of the cross-ownership rule. Designed to increase media competition, it often has the opposite result. Boston used to have three newspapers, one of which went under when it lost its profitable TV license in the 1970s. The *Herald* and the *Post* both lose millions. Perhaps there are rich megalomaniacs other than Murdoch who would like to subsidize these papers, but without the benefit of a TV station this will be a costlier enterprise. One or both may well fold. And if they merely fall into the hands of a proprietor more to the liking of Senator Hollings and his friends—that is, more like the *Boston Globe* and the *New York Times*—well, that's not exactly in the spirit of media competition either, is it?

□ NOTE: The author of the ad parody on page 16 is Dan Halberstein, whose humor articles have appeared frequently in TNR and elsewhere.

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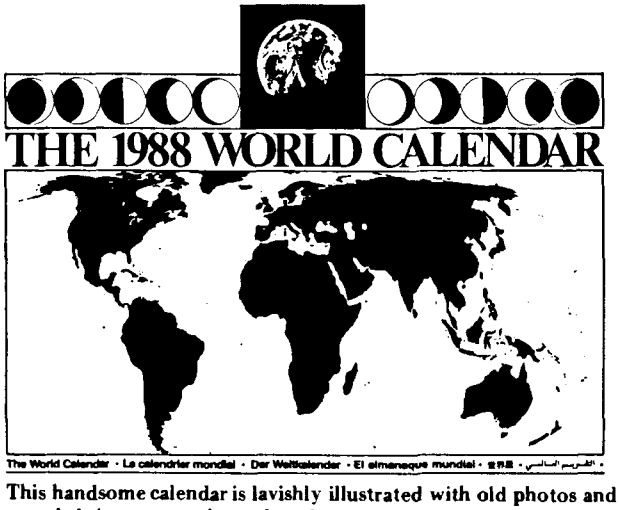
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Euphoric Reagan Claims Star Wars Dispute 'Over'
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To SDI
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—*Newsday*, December 12
(thanks to Mark Nadel, New York, New York)

Nominee forthright, evasive

—*Helena* (Montana) *Independent Record*
(writing about Anthony Kennedy), December 15

☐ FROST BITES MAN:

Long, cold winter expected in Siberia

—*Boston Globe*, December 17
(thanks to Wayne Curtis, Portland, Maine)

WHITE HOUSE WATCH

COLOR UP

PRESIDENT REAGAN was sputtering mad last year when he learned of Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall's comment that, for blacks, Reagan is the worst president of the century. "You know," the president told aides, "he really doesn't know my record." Marshall's charge "really got to him, really bothered him," a White House official said. It wasn't the first time Reagan had complained about how his feeling toward blacks has been misconstrued. One official says Reagan often speaks "in a sad, disappointed way" about the racism charge. And the president acknowledged at a nationally televised press conference last October 22 that "there are some who believe I have a prejudice in that way and am a racist. And that is one of the most frustrating things to me."

With a year left in his presidency, Reagan has time to do something about his problem. He passed up a good chance on January 15, Martin Luther King's Birthday. For three years now, Education Secretary William Bennett has been invited by Coretta Scott King to speak that day at the Martin Luther King Center in Atlanta. This year he urged that Reagan speak in his place. But the White House declined, and instead opted for a bland presidential statement on King's birthday. Still, there will be other opportunities.

Why bother to jump at them? For one thing, it's not healthy for the country to have a racially divisive president. True, any Republican president is bound to be somewhat divisive, since blacks are overwhelmingly Democratic. But Reagan has made matters worse by his civil rights policies and his indifference to black issues. In an ABC News/*Washington Post* poll last December 20, 60 percent of whites but only 27 percent of blacks said the president was doing a good job. And this represented one of Reagan's better showings with blacks. Worse, Reagan rarely appears before blacks outside the White House. He addressed the NAACP in 1981, was booed, and hasn't spoken to a major black organization since.

BY IGNORING BLACKS, Reagan undercuts his own agenda. "There's fertile ground out there in the black community," says Gary Bauer, Reagan's domestic policy adviser. The cluster of family issues that Reagan is pushing—"just say no" to drugs and teenage sex, housing and education vouchers, ownership of public housing, "traditional values," enterprise zones—are popular among blacks. "There's no difference between Reagan and blacks there," says a senior White House official. Yet blacks remain wary of any alliance with Reagan. "The disconnect comes when blacks look at other issues that amount to a litmus test," the official says. On civil rights and attention to black issues, Reagan fails.

A few blacks are willing to join Reagan anyway. At a White House meeting on September 30, a black minister, George Lucas of Petersburg, Virginia, gave an emotional endorsement of Reagan. "We have an overabundance of people that support pornography, sex, liquor, drugs, the whole bit," Lucas said. "America needs to get back to the word of God . . . so that we can do what's right and have this country go on upwards and onward to the destiny that it's destined to do. We need to support you, and I call on Americans, black Americans, today, of all persuasions, some that are poor." Reagan was taken with Lucas's call for a spiritual revival. Abraham Lincoln said he couldn't govern without calling on God, Reagan responded. "Well, I subscribe to that. And the only thing that worries me is that sometimes I wonder if maybe if I'm going to call and he's going to give me a busy signal because I do it so often."

Black hostility to Reagan also hurts the GOP. In 1986 Democrats won a half-dozen tight Senate races by piling up lopsided majorities among blacks, who now turn out to vote in higher percentages than whites in many states. Republicans have an image problem among blacks, and Reagan has contributed to it. In a Gallup Poll last year conducted for the Joint Center for Political Studies, a meager 17 percent of blacks said Republicans care about their problems. Nonetheless, Eddie Williams, the JCPS president, says: "There is considerable potential for the GOP to win a larger share of black support." Black attachment to the Democratic Party is weakening, he says, and many younger blacks (18- to 29-year-olds) are inclined to join the GOP.

Reagan could help attract them, but only if he's willing to face up to mistakes he's made in the last seven years. That may be asking too much. To my knowledge, Reagan has only admitted two mistakes in public life—signing California legislation that made abortions easier to get and

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getting involved in Iranamok. But he wouldn't have to violate any principles or fire Attorney General Edwin Meese III and Brad Reynolds, the chief of the Justice Department's civil rights division. If Reagan suddenly announced that he favors affirmative action, busing, and stiff economic sanctions against South Africa, he'd merely lose credibility. He would not be taken seriously, by blacks least of all. Besides, Reagan's position on busing and quotas is enormously popular. Instead, he needs to confess publicly to blacks that he made mistakes, ask for forgiveness, and plead for support on his own issues. This might work, especially if Reagan were sincere about it.

Oddly enough, there is support for this approach inside the administration, though not at the White House. What would Reagan apologize for? Four things. The first is his own indifference. Even if he doesn't want more civil rights legislation, Reagan could have exerted moral leadership on racial matters. But he didn't. The killing at Howard Beach and the turmoil in Forsyth County, Georgia, came and went with scarcely a word of moral guidance from the president. Maybe he's got a good excuse for this. Maybe he was too busy on other issues. But in a speech making overtures to blacks, he'd better vow to speak out from now on whenever racism rears. Then he should actually speak out.

The second is Martin Luther King's Birthday. Reagan personally opposed making it a national holiday, so this can't be blamed on Meese and Reynolds. But now that it's an established holiday and Reagan himself has occasionally praised King, an admission that he erred shouldn't be so hard.

The third is the Voting Rights Act. At best, the administration can be faulted for dawdling in 1981 before announcing a position on extending the act. At worst, it can be accused of attempting to gut the act. In any case, the Reagan administration gave the impression of wanting to weaken a fundamental civil rights statute. Indeed, some in the administration did want to weaken it. They failed. Reagan should say he's glad they did.

The fourth is the Bob Jones University case involving tax deductions for segregated schools. This did more to alienate blacks than any single thing Reagan did in his first term. Reynolds grudgingly admits that the administration handled this poorly. He insists the issue was the power of the Internal Revenue Service to revoke tax deductibility. But the administration was also under pressure—from House GOP Whip Trent Lott, among others—to come to the aid of segregated academies. Reynolds says the IRS issue should have been raised in another case. "It's too bad the issue was couched in racial terms," he says. "We didn't handle it as well as we could have from a p.r. standpoint." Reagan would have to be a lot more apologetic than that. On Bob Jones, abject might be the appropriate stance.

APOLOGIZING IS the easy part. Ralph Neas, the executive director of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, says it will be "difficult" to take Reagan at face value. Neas and Reynolds have created a "poisonous and confrontational atmosphere. . . . However, if he were serious about making such an effort, the civil rights community would be cooperative. Substantive and concrete actions would be necessary, not just rhetoric and photo opportunities." Some substance is possible. The administration and civil rights leaders aren't that far apart on a fair housing bill. And Reagan may be able to finesse the sweeping Civil Rights Restoration Act, which Meese and Reynolds detest. That act would make it easier to bring lawsuits under the 1964 Civil Rights Act. It is mired in a tangential dispute over abortion.

Reagan could pack nearly everything into a single speech. His speechwriters can plagiarize Bennett's talks on Martin Luther King Day, which are models of a conservative approach to King and civil rights. Bennett plays up King's religious side (referring to him as "Reverend King," not "Dr. King") and his support for high academic standards and traditional moral values.

The question at the White House is what would this produce for Reagan in 1988? Conservatives, already upset over Reagan's schmoozing with Mikhail Gorbachev, would be mad. "If the president made an appeal based on the idea that he's made mistakes, the conservative base of the party would see this as mushy-headedness," says a Reagan aide. That might make ratification of the INF treaty more dicey, among other things. But at least Reagan might get black leaders off his back. The charge that he's a racist—which he's not—would disappear. And Reagan could stop bellyaching about being misunderstood.

FRED BARNES

Letter from the publicist.

MAN OF THE YEAR

"Soloninkin, 42, spent ten days painting Gorbachev's likeness on a 4 ¾-inch by 6-inch papier-mâché box that had been slow-baked in a 212° F oven for nearly a month. . . . [Gorbachev is] the first Man of the Year whose cover portrait was taken from a lacquered Russian box." —*Time*, Letter from the Publisher, January 4, 1988

Most readers may not recognize the style of photography employed for TNR's Man of the Year cover portrait this week, but creatures from Mars probably would. The image (see the black dot, bottom right-hand corner of cover) is actually the view from space of this year's Man seated on his front porch. For more than six million years, humans (and their forerunners, the apes) have pondered the limitless vistas of the heavens. Some have even questioned what life forms on other planets would look like. Well, this week TNR offers the first ever example of what we look like to them. Our cover shows what a Martian (or a Neptunian, as the case may be) would see if he tried to spot TNR's Man of the Year—not just any man, but the person who has

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most influenced the year's events, for good or ill.

The photographs themselves were snapped by TNR Reporter-Researchers Ari Posner and Richard Blow. The two were fired into orbit in early October, so that their trajectories would be perfectly aligned to snap the photo on the preassigned day. (It's hard enough getting a world leader to stop to answer questions; you can imagine the difficulty in having him sit for an invisible camera perched 16,478 miles away in space.) While Blow returned to Earth to interview the Great Figure 24 miles north of Irkutsk, in the freezing far reaches of Siberia, Posner journeyed to Alpha, the third satellite of Jupiter, where the technique of developing the highly unusual space negative has been perfected by a "Regular Fellow" of the Jupiter Astro-Hagiography Institute. Members of this group are believed to have concocted the method "as a complete joke, to waste your bloody money," nearly three years ago. Posner reentered Earth's orbit early last month.

Some readers were probably not aware that TNR even had a Man of the Year. Of course, the selection of the Man has been an integral part of our year-end thought-provoking and analytical wrap-up since our founding in 1914—more than a decade, we might note, before *Time* began choosing its own Man of the Year. It's just that until now we have refrained from revealing the name of our choice, for fear that it would go to his head.

From the beginning TNR's publisher set down the rationale for establishing a TNR Man: "In no other way can we so effectively explain the year's events, so thoroughly elucidate the significance of the changes confronting society, while also doubling our seasonally adjusted advertising revenue, than to reduce the woof and warp of a year's worth of history to a cheap gimmick." Seven decades later, we proudly affirm that the same spirit infused the choice of this year's Great Figure.

Our story begins on page 153.

ARI Z. POSNER

Let the dollar go.

TIME FOR INACTION

THE LONG DECLINE of the dollar, greeted with relief when it started three years ago, has begun to create consternation in the world's central banks, nervousness in financial markets, and opportunities for the reindustrialization of America as manufactured exports increase and imports decrease. As I write, massive intervention by central banks is reversing that decline, at least temporarily.

On balance, however, the decline is a good thing and ought to continue. There are risks, of course. But efforts to stabilize the dollar will ultimately fail. And in the meantime they will compromise the critical goals of maintaining full employment and raising our long-term rate of economic growth.

It would be wonderful if American producers were able to compete effectively on world markets at current exchange rates. But almost all experts agree that at current rates the United States will not be able to achieve trade balance in the foreseeable future. Importing much more than we export, we began by drawing down our foreign assets in the early 1980s, and now are going ever deeper into debt. In recent years, about half of all U.S. net investment has been financed from abroad, and our foreign debt is likely to exceed $1 trillion by the early 1990s if current exchange rates are maintained.

ALTHOUGH TRADE FIGURES will improve in coming months as a delayed response to past dollar declines, hopes that the dollar has already fallen enough to balance our international books are probably forlorn. After the dramatic declines of the last two years, the dollar is now only slightly lower than its 1980 level. In 1980 U.S. trade was nearly balanced. However, much has changed since then, and almost all the changes suggest that the exchange rate at which the United States could balance its current account is way below even the current level:

- The American economy has grown faster than the economies of many of our trading partners, causing American demand for foreign products to rise more rapidly than foreign demand for our own products.
- There has been a permanent decline in agricultural prices that hurts export revenues.
- In 1980 the Latin American debtor countries were borrowing and spending. Today they are repaying their debts, and this can be done only by exporting more than they import.
- In 1980 the United States was a net creditor. Today it is already a net debtor and accumulating $100 billion or more in debt each year. These debts must be repaid, with interest. Ultimately, therefore, trade balance is not enough. Like the Latin American debtor nations, we too will have to run a trade surplus to keep our capital accounts in order. That is, we will have to supply the rest of the world more goods and services than we take from it, using the difference to pay off our debts.
- Finally, protracted overvaluation of the dollar from 1981 through 1985 dislodged American firms from traditional markets and allowed foreign firms to gain a toehold. The legacy of dollar overvaluation is that undervaluation will be required for a while if U.S. firms are to regain market share.

U.S. trade was balanced in 1980 only after the exchange rate of the dollar had drifted downward during the 1970s. The causes of that decline—including the growth of the newly industrialized countries such as Korea and relatively slow productivity growth in the United States—have persisted during the 1980s. These factors taken together make it very likely that the U.S. trade account will not come nearly into balance at current exchange rates. Exchange rates may need to fall by as much

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as another 25 percent in the next few years.

The United States cannot accumulate foreign debt indefinitely. At some point, foreigners will stop being willing to export real goods and services to us in return for U.S. paper IOUs. They will start cashing the IOUs for U.S. products, requiring us to export more than we import for a time as we repay our debts.

There is every reason to think the day of reckoning is at hand. Private investors around the world have recognized these realities and barely increased their holdings of dollar assets in the last year. Instead, the U.S. international deficit has been financed almost entirely by foreign central banks. The Fed or foreign central banks can certainly slow the dollar's decline by intervening and buying dollars in foreign exchange markets. But intervention cannot affect the basic reality of the growing U.S. debt, and so it can only postpone the day when the dollar falls to the point where the United States is able to pay its way.

THE ISSUE FOR economic policy is not whether the dollar will fall, but when. Understandably there is a strong political urge to sidestep this critical issue. Some American politicians urge a "competitiveness agenda" to restore the vitality and productivity of the American economy so that we can compete more effectively at current exchange rates. Others stress the need to reduce foreign trade barriers.

The unfortunate reality is that no amount of merit pay for teachers, revitalized infrastructure, investment tax credits, or tariffs is going to have much effect on how many Japanese cars Americans buy over the next few years, or how many manufactured goods American firms are able to export. A ten percent decline in the dollar exchange rate is equivalent to a ten percent tariff on all imported goods and a ten percent subsidy for all exported goods. Its short-run impact on the trade balance dwarfs anything that can be done to improve productivity.

International economic statesmen pontificate about the need for cooperative solutions to the world's problems, holding out the hope that a reduction in U.S. budget deficits combined with expansionary policies abroad could bring balance to the world economy without the need for further dollar depreciation. This is a chimera. U.S. exports are running at about $350 billion a year. If the economies of the rest of the world expanded by an extra four percent, a spectacular and unlikely achievement, the demand for U.S. exports would rise by $30 billion at the outside, not nearly enough to eliminate our massive trade deficit.

What about reductions in the U.S. budget deficit? Arguments that deficit reduction can reduce the U.S. trade deficit without pain are either confused or disingenuous. The trade deficit can decline for only two reasons: if U.S. products become more competitive on both home and foreign markets because of a decline in the exchange value of the dollar, and if U.S. growth lags behind that of other nations. As an arithmetic proposition, demands that the United States reduce its trade deficit and at the same time stabilize or raise the value of the dollar are tantamount to demands that the U.S. economy stop growing and go into recession.

This is not to deny the crucial importance of budget deficit reduction. As the dollar comes down, there is a serious risk of overheating the economy unless the budget deficit is reduced to make room for the extra demand that will come as exports rise and American consumers shift to domestic producers. Furthermore, deficit reduction is crucial for long-term growth. If the dollar falls and we stop borrowing from abroad, American investment will be limited to American national saving. Budget deficits depressed national saving to the point where we saved only two percent of GNP last year. This is not enough to maintain past productivity performance, let alone generate any improvement.

THERE IS NO escaping the fact that the dollar exchange rate will fall. Nonetheless, there is likely to be a strong temptation to act in the face of a declining dollar. In the United States, a free-falling dollar will reduce real wages and increase the rate of inflation. Abroad, a weak dollar will reduce export revenues and make American imports much more of a threat. But both the U.S. monetary authority and foreign central banks should resist the urge to act. Given the central reality that the United States cannot run a large trade deficit forever, policy actions to counter a falling dollar are not likely to do more than forestall the inevitable, and are likely to have important adverse side effects.

In the face of a falling dollar and increasing inflation, the U.S. Federal Reserve might tighten monetary policy and raise interest rates in an effort to stabilize the dollar and avert an inflationary spiral. The trouble is that the U.S. trade balance must eventually balance, and recession is a very costly way to do it. Reducing U.S. real GNP by one percent reduces the trade deficit by only about $7 billion. Balancing trade through economic contraction would be neither pleasant nor practicable. Nor would a recession be conducive to the major attack on budget deficits.

Trying to put off the inevitable is especially unwise because a sharp and sudden dollar decline is likely to be less inflationary than a gradual drift. The increase in import prices associated with a falling dollar will happen whether the dollar falls gradually or suddenly. But this is only a one-shot problem. The real risk is of an inflationary spiral. That risk is unavoidable, but the spiral is less likely to start if those higher prices come quickly and are clearly perceived as a one-shot adverse shock caused by the mistakes of the past.

Foreign central banks may intervene to prop up the dollar, as they have under the Louvre accord. This will be a costly exercise if the dollars they buy decline in value despite their heroic efforts. Rather than engaging in futile efforts to override market exchange rates, foreign governments would be better advised to take steps that would reduce the necessary decline in the dollar, and would help their economies to weather it more easily. These include microeconomic measures to reduce trade barriers and open markets to American products; expansions of domestic demand to replace sales lost in the American market and

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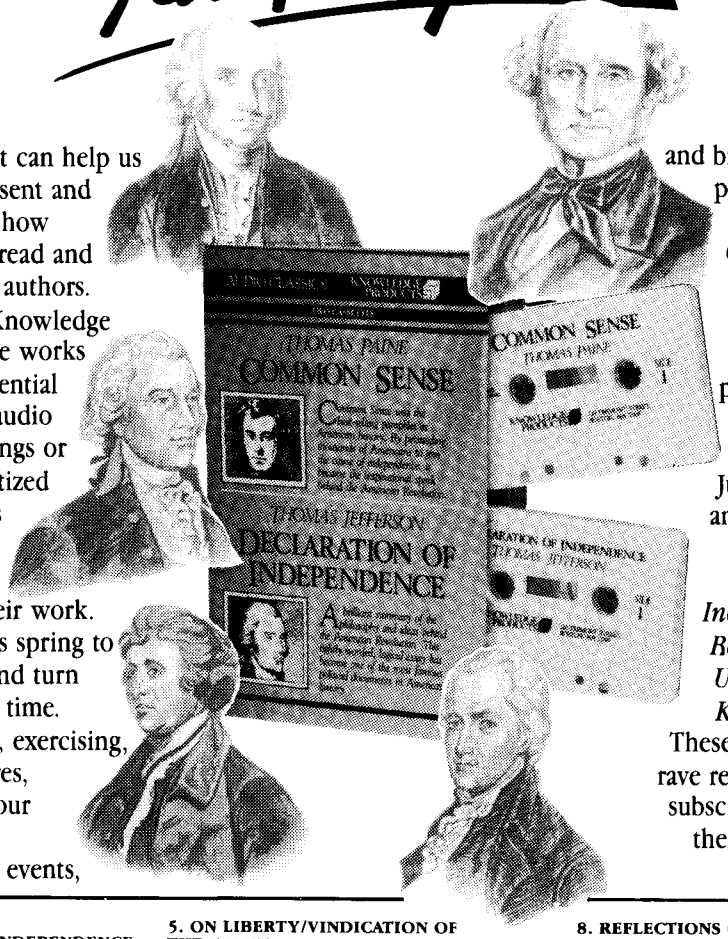

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As Free Americans, it is our duty to air the facts about the agreement currently being considered in Washington, and about the arms race in general.

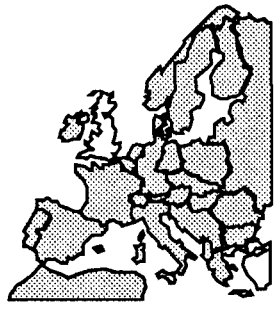
In the course of negotiations, it is always possible for normally clearheaded men to become soft, fuzzy thinkers.

Henry Kissinger, Richard Nixon, and Ronald Reagan are among those who have succumbed to basic human urges for coexistence. Thus we drift toward unparalleled catastrophe.

The Situation in Europe

1. Analyses currently in vogue at the White House depict the Soviet threat in the manner of the above map, with the Warsaw Pact in gray. The error: assuming that Soviet troops must be present to ensure servility to the Kremlin's goals. The unpalatable truth is far more grim.

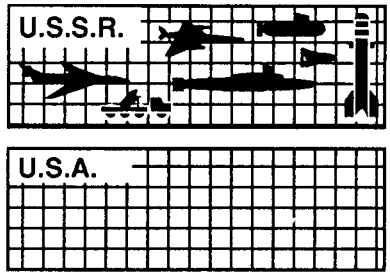
2. Shown above are nations with a Soviet military presence, nations that have received Soviet aid in recent years, and nations under Communist governments. This analysis dispenses with the notion of a multipolar Red world, replacing it with the more consistent "monolith" model.*



3. To set the record completely straight, it is our duty to point out that those nations with powerful Communist or Socialist parties are part and parcel of Soviet plans for global dominion.

4. (Not Pictured) Liberals, too.

** Or Socialist*



These graphs illustrate the basic disparity in the superpowers' modernization programs. As shown above, the Soviets have tested seven new major strategic systems since 1970. In contrast, the United States has tested no new Soviet strategic systems in the last twenty years.

The So-Called "Arms Race" So-Called "Cycle"

The "arms race." How many times must we hear this misleading terminology? Besides laying the blame for the nuclear buildup on *both* sides rather than on the Soviets, the term also insinuates that both sides employ similar means to further the progress of belligerency in the world.

In reality, however, it is the United States that makes the technological breakthroughs, then forfeits them by voting them down in Congress.

The technology is then given to cheapskate allies who don't spend enough to protect themselves. From there it is either stolen from the inept British or bought from the immoral French by the Soviet Union.

The Soviets then typically produce gigantic quantities of the technologically advanced system, dwarfing any production the United States might undertake.

"Arms Race" Q&A

Q: What is the "arms race"?

A: The "arms race" is an unproven hypothesis, peddled in our schools as scientific fact, much like the theory of evolution. The "arms race" is a fallacy invented to make miniseries that frighten housewives who are too emotional to look beyond the scarred planet and human suffering and see the reality of numbers.

Q: No—I mean, what does "arms race" mean?

A: Nothing at all. It is a hollow phrase. A canard. An old wives' tale. An oxymoron, a contradiction in terms. Legs race, not arms.

Q: Can't you at least give me a hint?

A: Well, okay. Here it is. The "arms race."

The "arms race" was invented by liberals who thought that the whole world of complex armaments could be fit into a single pattern. They assert that one country's nuclear buildup actually *causes* a parallel buildup on the other side.

Needless to say, the argument doesn't hold water.

Q: Well, what's wrong with it?

A: The "arms race" concept relies on many fragile, even erroneous assumptions: that the superpowers are engaged in a "competition," that military strategists are either stupid or inept or unintelligent or both,† and, most crucially, that one side's behavior can causally affect the other side's. This can only be described as double-plus untrue.

Q: Excuse me?

A: Make that hopelessly naive.

Q: Why?

A: *Ours is not to reason why,*
Ours is but to. . .

Jesus, sorry. Where was I? Oh yeah, hopelessly naive.

For centuries, philosophers and scientists from Roger and Francis Bacon to Huey and Isaac Newton have been trying to prove causality. Not for the "arms race." For anything.

In philosophical circles, the matter has been all but put to rest. Causality simply cannot be proven. We can no more believe one side's buildup causes that of the other side than we can believe in Santa Claus or the Easter Bunny as dependable, militarily important considerations.

Q: What are we left with, then?

A: Arms buildups are just a fact of life—that's what the treaty-makers and peaceniks fail to realize. They seek to bring to the everyday level of causality something beyond its realm—that grand mystery we call escalation.

† An excellent refutation of this assertion can be found in Kriegtodd's book *Our Valuable Belligerents*, available for $314.95 (cost) from Pentagon Press.

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expand markets for American exports; and efforts to induce firms to stop shaving margins so thin on exports to the United States.

October's market crash was a warning about the instability created by unsustainable policies. Maintaining current exchange rates indefinitely is not a sustainable policy. The sooner the dollar falls, the less debt we will have to repay, the sooner American manufacturers will be revitalized, and the less chance we face of a major recession. The market will bring the dollar down, unless governments try to interfere. Now is the time for inaction.

LAWRENCE SUMMERS

Lawrence Summers is the Nathaniel Ropes Professor of Political Economy at Harvard.

Can we get it right this time?

THE PANAMA PERPLEX

BY TINA ROSENBERG

Panama City

It was a rainy Sunday in Panama and the 30th day of Ramón Eskildsen's new career. On August 15 Eskildsen, who drives a BMW and lives in one of Panama City's nicer neighborhoods, quit his job as a Xerox executive. Today he was crouched in the doorway of a Minimax supermarket while bullets whizzed by outside. Eskildsen was at his new full-time job protesting the regime of Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega.

Eskildsen was part of a four-hour march in pouring rain to commemorate the second anniversary of the decapitation of Dr. Hugo Spadafora, a Noriega critic who had accused the general of drug trafficking and was last seen alive in the custody of the Panamanian Defense Force, which Noriega controls. For the first few hours the march was a parade, with about 2,000 Panamanians in symbolic anti-Noriega white clothing or black "Justice" headbands singing, eating Popsicles, waving white banners, and chanting, "Noriega is a murderer." But it scattered abruptly when goon squads, including military and government officials, began throwing fireworks and shooting at the crowd.

In the evening Eskildsen went to mass. Planned for Spadafora, the mass was also said for Carlos Ephrain Guzmán, the 49-year-old owner of a small bakery killed during the march. The Spadafora family passed out cards with a painting of an angel carrying the head of St. John the Baptist. "Perhaps in Nicaragua or El Salvador such decapitations are normal, but not here," said Eskildsen, exhausted and soaked. "Here we are not accustomed to seeing bodies with no heads."

Panama is a different country today than it was a few months ago. On June 6 Col. Roberto Díaz Herrera, the second most important man in the Panamanian Defense Force, and therefore in all of Panama, spurred by his conscience and forced retirement, announced to an astonished nation what it had suspected all along. The Defense Force had stolen the 1984 election (indeed, much of the fraud had taken place in Díaz Herrera's house); its leaders were fat with corruption; and Noriega had ordered the 1985 murder of Spadafora. The day after Díaz Herrera's confession, while political opposition leaders were debating what to do, a hundred thousand people—a tenth of the population of Panama City—went into the streets at noon. Since then a spontaneous wave of revulsion has gripped the country. For months afterward, Panama City's main street was filled with the ranks of the "seditious," as Noriega calls them, the "Civic Crusade," as they call themselves, who emerged each day from their banks and their office buildings into the sticky heat of noon in "I ♥ Sedition" T-shirts to honk horns, throw confetti, and scream, "Down with the pineapple!" an allusion to Noriega's pockmarked complexion.

Although the events of recent months have not brought about a change in Panama's government, they have changed Panama. A country of two million people at the southernmost tip of Central America, Panama has never considered itself part of Central America and has never shared in the regional heritage of politicization and protest. "For a Panamanian to pick up a rock is the same as a Central American picking up a machine gun," said Ricardo Arias Calderon, leader of the Christian Democratic Party. Now the headlines sound ominously familiar: government-sponsored paramilitary troops shoot at protesters, politicians receive death threats in the form of animal entrails smeared on their office door, and "Dobermans," as riot police are called, throw tear gas bombs into houses in the slums. What had been a relatively unrepressive military dictatorship has hardened, and this peaceful country is learning fear and violence. Panama has joined Central America.

This is exactly what the United States, through years of

continued on page 20

Tina Rosenberg is a writer living in Santiago, Chile.

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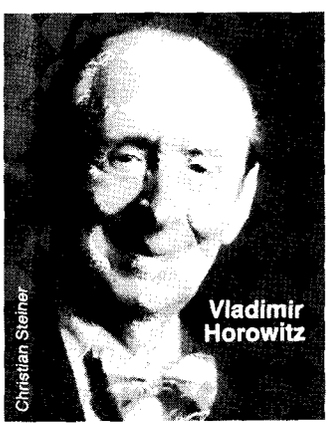

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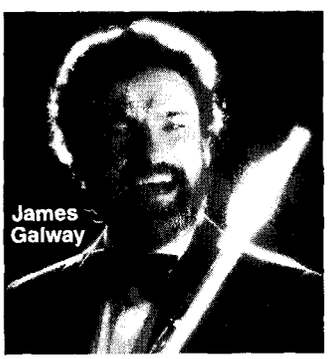

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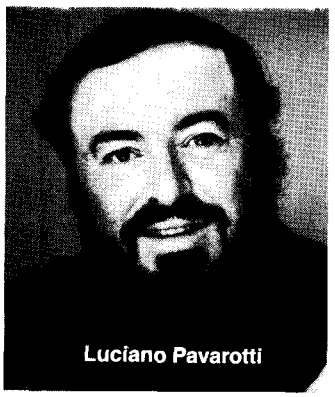

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support for General Noriega, has been trying to prevent. Historically so close to the United States that its currency is the U.S. dollar, Panama is probably the most strategically important country south of Mexico. Under the Panama Canal Treaties of 1977, the United States must cede the Canal to complete Panamanian control on December 31, 1999. Panama is also home until that date of the Southern Command, headquarters for U.S. military and intelligence operations in Latin America. The Canal and the command depend on the stability and goodwill of Panama's government. Before June 6, Noriega seemed to offer both. As Franklin Roosevelt said of Nicaragua's Anastasio Somoza, "He might be an SOB, but he's our SOB." Today, hoping to arouse international support and Panamanian nationalism, Noriega is accusing the United States of directing the protests, straining the old ties.

The United States is no longer Noriega's protector. After the attack on the U.S. Embassy on June 30, the State Department suspended all U.S. aid and Secretary of State George Shultz endorsed the Civic Crusade. This decision to shift support from a corrupt, unloved dictator to a peaceful, democratic, popular protest movement has, bizarrely enough, won the United States the official condemnation of every government in Latin America, with both Castro's Cuba and Pinochet's Chile siding with Noriega against U.S. interventionism. The diplomatic situation in Panama today is a giant French farce in which each party, having woken up in a new bed with a different partner, is choosing to pretend that nothing has changed.

THE PUBLIC PROTESTS have diminished with time, as the initial expectation that they would bring down Noriega has worn off. But opposition to Noriega has not decreased. A recent Gallup Poll found that 75 percent of all Panamanians want Noriega to give up control of the country. It seems hard to believe that even a quarter of the country supports him. No matter whom I talked with—anti-U.S. students, poor families in the countryside, blacks in the San Miguelito district, or wealthy bankers—the only support I heard for Noriega came from the military or officials of his party.

The Panamanian government says that the opponents of Noriega are *rabiblancos*—"white tails"—and his supporters are poor blacks. Not really. Panama today is an uneasy marriage of the Jetsons and the Flintstones, a place where facsimile machines whir in carpeted offices a few blocks from a hospital to which surgical patients must bring their own thread. There are two Panamas, but Noriega enjoys the support of neither.

There are few *rabiblancos* in San Miguelito, a city of 250,000 mostly poor people outside the capital. Despite government promises, residents said that there are no books or paper in the schools, roads and bridges are rarely repaired, and in the entire city there is no hospital. I asked if people had work—official unemployment is 10.6 percent here, but analysts say that underemployment and unemployment is really about 45 percent. Maria, a housewife in rubber thongs, laughed and pointed to her children's high school diplomas on the wall. "One of my five has a job," she said.

Only a few miles from Maria's house, downtown Panama City looks more like Miami than San Miguelito. The cashier in a supermarket scans microwave popcorn and Bartles and Jaymes wine coolers on her electronic register. On the traffic circle outside is a Hardee's, a Dairy Queen, and a McDonald's. The skyline is defined by mirrored office towers and gleaming white 20-story apartment complexes, about half of which are owned by the Colombian drug mafia. The protests at noon each day are run from the Chamber of Commerce. If news about Panama appears in the foreign press, Crusade supporters in Miami and Washington fax copies to about 40 local law firms and businesses, where they are copied by the thousands and passed out on the street. And this wealthy Panama suffers as well. Four different families showed me tapes of marches or funerals on their VCRs, stopping the tape to check the angle of a gunshot or to point out a prominent figure.

THE SAME historical developments that built a revolution run by fax machine also produced the base for what Panamanians are protesting against: corruption. The service economy, which today accounts for three-quarters of Panama's GNP, has its base in the Canal, but also includes the world's second-largest duty-free zone after Hong Kong, a fleet of 12,500 Panama-registry ghost ships, an oil pipeline, and the offshore banking center. Since the banking center was established in 1970, about 120 international banks have come here, bringing with them modern communications, financial professionals from around the world, and a huge quantity of dirty money. "The secrecy clause is the secret of success here," said one Panamanian banker. Panama offers depositors tax-free, numbered, anonymous accounts, has no controls on bringing cash into the country, and unlike the United States, does not require banks to report cash transactions of more than $10,000. The U.S. Treasury Department guesses that $600 million of the $1 billion that passes through Panama every year is laundered drug money.

It is virtually impossible to trace money in a Panamanian account, but particularly nervous depositors can form a dummy corporation for $1,000 with almost any lawyer in Panama City. The company's "profit" then goes into the bank account for a double veil of secrecy. Steven Samos, a Panamanian corporation vendor, testified in Miami that when a client once scolded an office boy for spilling coffee on him, Samos advised him: Better not complain. He's the president of your company. Three of Lt. Col. Oliver North's companies, Lake Resources Inc., Udall Research Co., and NRAF Inc., were Panamanian corporations.

"The Panama Defense Force is the axle around which the wheel of corruption turns," said a U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee study in 1985. The Defense Force controls the police, narcotics police, forestry, civil aviation, currency customs, and migration agencies. It came to power in a 1968 coup when a group of officers pushed aside a civilian president-elect. Omar Torrijos, later to appoint

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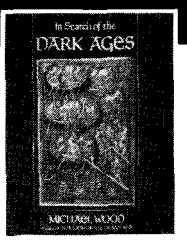

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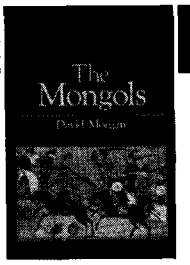

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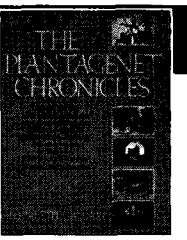

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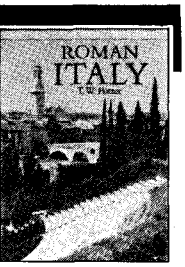

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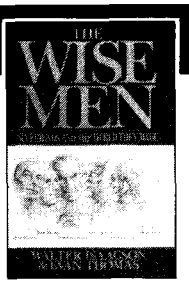

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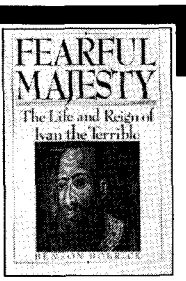

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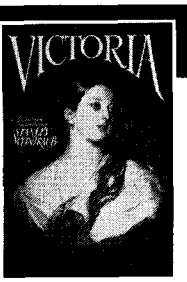

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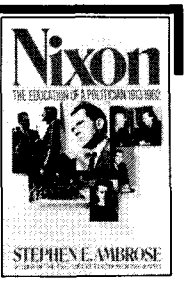

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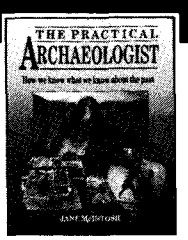

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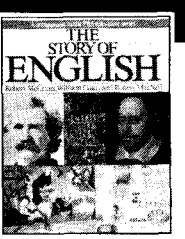

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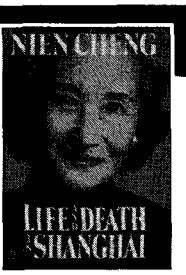

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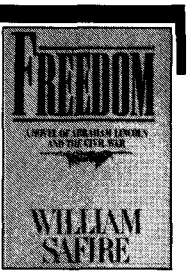

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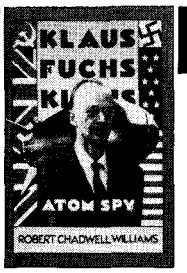

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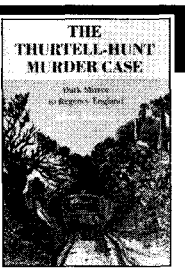

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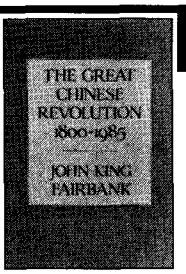

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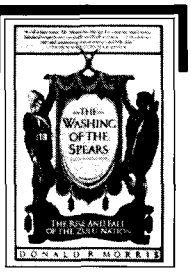

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himself brigadier general, emerged as the leader of the group. A handsome, charismatic man who liked women and drink, Torrijos was Panama's answer to Juan and Evita Perón combined. Like Juan Perón, he created a party and ran his country on a kind of demagoguery and populism that resisted a political label. Like Evita, he was a showman. He traveled with a suitcase full of money and loved to arrive in a small town, knock on the door of a house, and press dollars into the startled housewife's hand. On borrowed money he built schools, libraries, and bridges (some of which functioned), and he died in 1981 in a mysterious plane crash before the Latin economies collapsed and the bills came due.

Noriega's brother was one of a group of officers who had once led a coup attempt against Torrijos. Noriega, then a captain in the Chiriquí province, backed Torrijos, earning the post of intelligence chief. Noriega rose quickly in the Torrijos regime by compiling dossiers on his rivals, and after Torrijos died, following the brief tenure of two other generals, he became the new strongman.

Noriega's empire is diverse. A 1976 series of articles by Seymour Hersh in the *New York Times* reported that Noriega was a double agent, on the payroll for years of both the CIA and Fidel Castro. Ramon Milian Rodríguez, a Cuban accountant who worked for both the CIA and the Medellín, Colombia, cocaine cartel, told a Senate panel that Noriega had a long-term relationship with the Medellín traffickers, a charge also made by a Panamanian pilot cooperating with a federal investigation in Miami. Milian Rodríguez said he brought Noriega $10 million a month from the cartel, and that Noriega took 1.5 percent of the cartel's Panama operations. Three U.S. government agencies have begun to investigate Noriega on charges of drug trafficking, money laundering, and selling high-technology equipment to Cuba.

PANAMANIANS HAVE KNOWN of Noriega's activities for years. But people put up with it. Thanks to Panama's base in services instead of agriculture, it was never divided into landed oligarchs and oppressed peasants. There is poverty here, but also social mobility, and a large middle class that thought about business, not politics. It must have seemed to Noriega that the system could go on forever—until the death of Hugo Spadafora.

Like the deaths of Benigno Aquino in the Philippines, Steve Biko in South Africa, and Pedro Joaquin Chamorro in Nicaragua, the murder of Hugo Spadafora produced not only a corpse—in this case, a headless corpse—but also a ghost that continues to haunt the Noriega regime. Spadafora had been Torrijos's vice minister of health, but he was no admirer of Noriega.

On September 13, 1985, Spadafora, who was living in Costa Rica, took a bus from Costa Rica to Panama. When the bus reached Panama, two Defense Force officials took Spadafora off the bus. It was the last time he was seen alive. The next day a Costa Rican man found his body under a bridge on the Costa Rican side of the border. The body showed bruises, fingernails black from torture, three broken ribs, and evidence of handcuffs. Scratched on his back was the inscription F-8, the signature of a Panamanian paramilitary group. Spadafora had been killed, the Costa Rican autopsy showed, by three surgically sophisticated vertical cuts that severed his head. The head was never found.

Then-President Nicolas Ardito Barletta, visiting the United Nations, promised to investigate the death. When he returned to Panama, Defense Force officers met him at the airport and took him to Noriega's office. He spent 14 hours there. After that, there was no more talk of investigation. No investigation was needed to galvanize the country. The brutality of the death and Díaz Herrera's confession did that.

NORIEGA IS now trying to turn the situation around with new spending, repressive measures, and accusations against the United States. Due to Torrijos's borrowing, even before the protests Panama had by far the highest external debt per capita in Latin America. Since the crisis began, the State Department has cut off current aid and Congress has voted to condition this year's aid—set for $33 million—on human rights improvements that do not appear likely. Crusade participants have withdrawn their money from Panamanian banks. Most important, the crisis has shaken global confidence in Panama's stability. Due to the crisis and a secrecy scare from a U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency operation in May, local deposits have dropped 13 percent since June.

With no currency of its own, Panama cannot finance deficits by printing money. Its only recourse is to cut spending. The government has canceled all new development projects, and in October President Eric Delvalle announced that the government would not pay salaries on time or meet its debt interest payments. To fight off a local bank collapse, which would topple the house of cards that is Panama's economy, banks have canceled new loans. Such measures, of course, have made the government even less popular.

Unable to quell discontent with new spending, Noriega has used repression. On June 11, five days after Díaz Herrera's confession, the government declared a state of emergency and suspended the constitution. On June 27 the three opposition daily newspapers, two weeklies, and four radio stations were closed, and soldiers arrested Díaz Herrera after attacking his house with bazookas, helicopters, and tear gas. He recanted his charges in jail. In October the government proposed new laws prohibiting statements that "offend the dignity" of Noriega and other officials, and excessive honking of horns, among other things. Three people have been shot to death since the protests began, and police truncheons, bullets, and tear gas have wounded dozens of others.

Noriega's third tactic is to paint himself as the victim of U.S. aggression, charging that the United States is trying to take back the Canal and punish Panama for its role in the Contadora peace process. Each new day in Panama seems to bring a new twist on the charge of U.S. interventionism.

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Posters on the streets show U.S. Ambassador Arthur Davis and Noriega with the headline: "Panamanian! Choose between the Panamanian patriot and the Yankee invader!" When some members of a U.S. Air Force school paid a call on the embassy, Delvalle charged that U.S. soldiers had invaded Panama City. On June 30 about 40 men, among them Revolutionary Democratic Party (the PRD) ministers, threw trash, stones, and paint at the U.S. Embassy and consulate, creating damage for which the Panamanian government later paid $106,000. Campaigns in the press have targeted the ambassador, deputy chief of mission, the economic attaché, and even the ambassador's daughter as meddlesome directors of the demonstrations. During the march commemorating Spadafora's death, David Miller, the economic attaché who was observing the march, was made to lie on the floor at gunpoint for half an hour, then arrested and held incommunicado overnight. In 1950s terminology, the United States has "lost" Panama. "Noriega isn't your SOB anymore," said Tomás Herrera, a lawyer who opposes the government. "Now he's just an SOB."

The U.S. government's position is rich with irony. President Carter heaped praise on Torrijos to encourage the Senate to ratify the Canal treaties. The United States had said nothing when officers overthrew the president-elect in 1968, or in 1984 when the same hapless politician was again denied office through fraud, even though the U.S. Embassy had proof that the military had stolen the election. Shultz even attended the inauguration of Ardito Barletta, the military's candidate.

Relations between the two militaries have been especially close. Ten thousand U.S. troops and their families still live in Panama, adding $200 million a year to the Panamanian economy. They can join the Balboa YMCA, go to their sons' junior high football games, and watch Johnny Carson or the Miss America pageant on Southern Command Network TV. The Southern Command needs Panamanian Defense Force acquiescence for its operations here, which include training and supply of the *contras*, and as Hersh reported, a listening post that covers all of Central America and much of South America. Indeed, Panama had only a police force until the United States created its military in 1956, named and designed after the dubious model of Somoza's National Guard. (The name was changed to the Defense Force in 1983.) At the U.S. School for the Americas, a training center for Latin military officers that was moved to the United States from the Canal Zone in 1978, Panamanian officers made up the third-largest group of graduates.

THE ROMANCE has certainly soured in the last few months. Why did the United States change its position? If punishing Panama for its role in Contadora were the purpose, there would be far subtler and more effective methods. There is more evidence that some U.S. critics are motivated by a desire to keep the Canal. "Our biggest problem is that our first supporter in the United States was Jesse Helms," said Gabriel Lewis, referring to the conservative North Carolina senator not previously distinguished by his concern for human rights. Helms led a move this October to keep control of the Canal if Panama does not allow the United States to defend it after 2000. The measure was defeated in the Senate by a vote of 50 to 39. But liberal senators and State Department officials pledge to adhere to the Canal treaties.

"The United States continues to hold the security of the Canal as a priority," said Christian Democratic leader Arias Calderon. "For that you need the stability of Panamanian society. What has changed is all these years the U.S. thought stability was independent of democratization and the military was the most important factor. Now it's obvious that democracy is not an independent variable."

U.S. SUPPORT for the Civic Crusade has mixed effects. Inside Panama, it seems to have helped. "We feel we're not alone," said Carlos Ernesto Gonzalez de la Lastra, a Crusade spokesman. But it lends credibility to the "interventionism" charge Noriega was making even while enjoying U.S. backing. It has helped Noriega abroad. If there is one issue that unites Latin America, it is opposition to U.S. interventionism. Not a single government in Latin America has spoken up for the Crusade; in September the Mexican government even gave Noriega a medal. "The United States has done him a great favor, it has made him a victim of the giant," said one Latin ambassador in Panama City. Although many ambassadors privately expressed their government's distaste for Noriega, their opposition to U.S. action against a sitting government is stronger. Some have had to perform astonishing contortions to support Noriega. Although the Sandinistas had often charged that the *contras* were being supplied and trained from U.S. bases here—impossible without a nod from Noriega—the charges vanished when Noriega came under U.S. attack. "We have no proof Noriega was sending arms to the *contras* or that he knew about U.S. training of them here," said a Nicaraguan government official.

The left in Panama, like everywhere else in Latin America, has little love for the United States, but Panama, so accustomed to U.S. support for a military government, struck me as the least likely country in the hemisphere to get excited about this new kind of Yankee interventionism. "Everyone has a sister or a cousin married to an America," said one Panamanian woman with a husband in the U.S. Air Force. Many Panamanians, especially the poor, said they did not want the U.S. bases to leave. On a dirt road outside of Chitré, near where a military base had been until four years ago, families said they wished the gringos would return. The Defense Force had promised to build a seawall to keep their homes from being flooded, but after years of delay, the families asked the U.S. soldiers to build it. "Things they built stayed built," said a woman, as I sat with her family on a Sunday morning, reminiscing about the soldiers. "They weren't just out to line their pockets. We cried so when they left." Her husband said that the soldiers gave the family a present to remember them by that he still keeps on his dresser. He showed it to me proudly. It was an empty bottle of mosquito repellant. □

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The moral and spiritual emptiness of New Age.

MORONIC CONVERGENCE

BY RICHARD BLOW

SHIRLEY MACLAINE must be in seventh heaven. In 1983, when she published *Out on a Limb*, the book that detailed her faith in reincarnation, she worried that people would think she was crazy. Some did, but millions bought the book. MacLaine has since appeared in the television dramatization of *Out on a Limb*, written two more reminiscences, and has more in the works.

Since 1983 MacLaine has shepherded into the American mainstream a host of ideas and practices known as the New Age movement. Gallup Polls show that from 20 percent to 35 percent of the American public believe they have had a past-life experience. And according to a study by SRI International, a California-based social research center, some five percent to ten percent of the population have adopted other New Age beliefs. One is "channeling," a kind of psychic talk show in which human mediums call forth the voices of long-dead spirits. Another involves crystals, which are quartz rocks. Thousands of people believe that crystals have the power to cure diseases and transmit human thoughts. But perhaps the best-known New Age performance was last summer's Harmonic Convergence, during which thousands gathered at "pressure points" around the world (Niagara Falls, Central Park), hugged, held hands, and chanted, united in the conviction that this would usher in a new era of world harmony.

Many skeptics have written off the New Age as just another California fad. It's true that until recently the "movement" had no clear agenda, no well-known spokesperson, no momentum. That's changing. There's a leader now, in MacLaine. There will be a church of sorts: MacLaine is planning to build a spiritual center in Colorado with some of her New Age profits. There are New Age think tanks such as Palo Alto's Creative Initiative Foundation. Increasingly, too, New Agers are getting aggressive about conversion, renting out theaters and concert halls in cities across the country for mass meetings. And the people who attend these meetings aren't the kind who'd follow Jim Jones to Guyana. They're prosperous, well-educated, otherwise thoughtful individuals. New Age may have started on the fringes of society, but it's not just for hippies anymore.

The New Age movement (no one really knows when the term was first used) began in California in the 1960s with the spread of Eastern philosophy, particularly Buddhist and Hindu, among a small number of mostly white, mostly young Americans. Skeptical about modern medicine and technology, disillusioned by the Vietnam War, the New Age pioneers experimented with alternative lifestyles that emphasized spiritual well-being over material gain. They practiced techniques such as meditation, holistic healing, and acupuncture to help them escape the apparent hostility of the outer world. Later their basket of Eastern mysticism would grow to include practices such as witchcraft, astrology, and rebirthing, a process in which one is "reborn" by regressing via hypnosis to the time of one's birth.

In the 1970s New Agers turned to ideas from America's history to reinforce their search for alternatives. Although not always spelled out, the individualist and transcendentalist theories of Walt Whitman and Ralph Waldo Emerson began to appear in the New Age universe. But the '70s were a time of disillusionment, and the practitioners of New Age capitalized on those feelings. To their utopianism they added a modern twist: the idea that devoting oneself to self-improvement was personally valuable *and* socially beneficial. They dubbed their cause the "human potential movement." Social pundits dubbed them the "Me Generation." Perhaps most indicative of the era was Werner Erhard's emotionally manipulative (and immensely profitable) est program, featuring weekend seminars at which you couldn't use the bathroom until you learned to love yourself.

In 1980 Marilyn Ferguson's *The Aquarian Conspiracy* was published, and it rapidly became the New Age bible. Ferguson argued that the world was entering a new era of harmony and peace. Ordinary people could help bring this about simply through their awareness of its inevitability. The more people were aware of the trend, the faster it would become reality. Though the book didn't offer many specifics, it helped transform the movement into more than a motley collection of rituals. It became a way of thinking applicable to any aspect of modern life: psychology, medicine, business, music, you name it. Since bringing on the New Age involved thought rather than deeds, New Agers wouldn't teach you how to do anything; they would tell you how to think about it. Attitude had become more important than action.

The bedrock of New Age thought now is the fulfillment of individual potential, with the implicit consequence of bringing the New Age closer. How fulfillment is achieved—whether through meditation, pop psychology, physical fitness, est, whatever—and what form it takes (money, power, sex) doesn't matter. What counts is the awareness that one has such potential and can exploit it. Thus *Pathways*, a New Age newspaper in Washington, D.C., defines itself with this credo: "The world public has become disenchanted with both the political and financial leadership. . . . All the individuals of humanity are looking for

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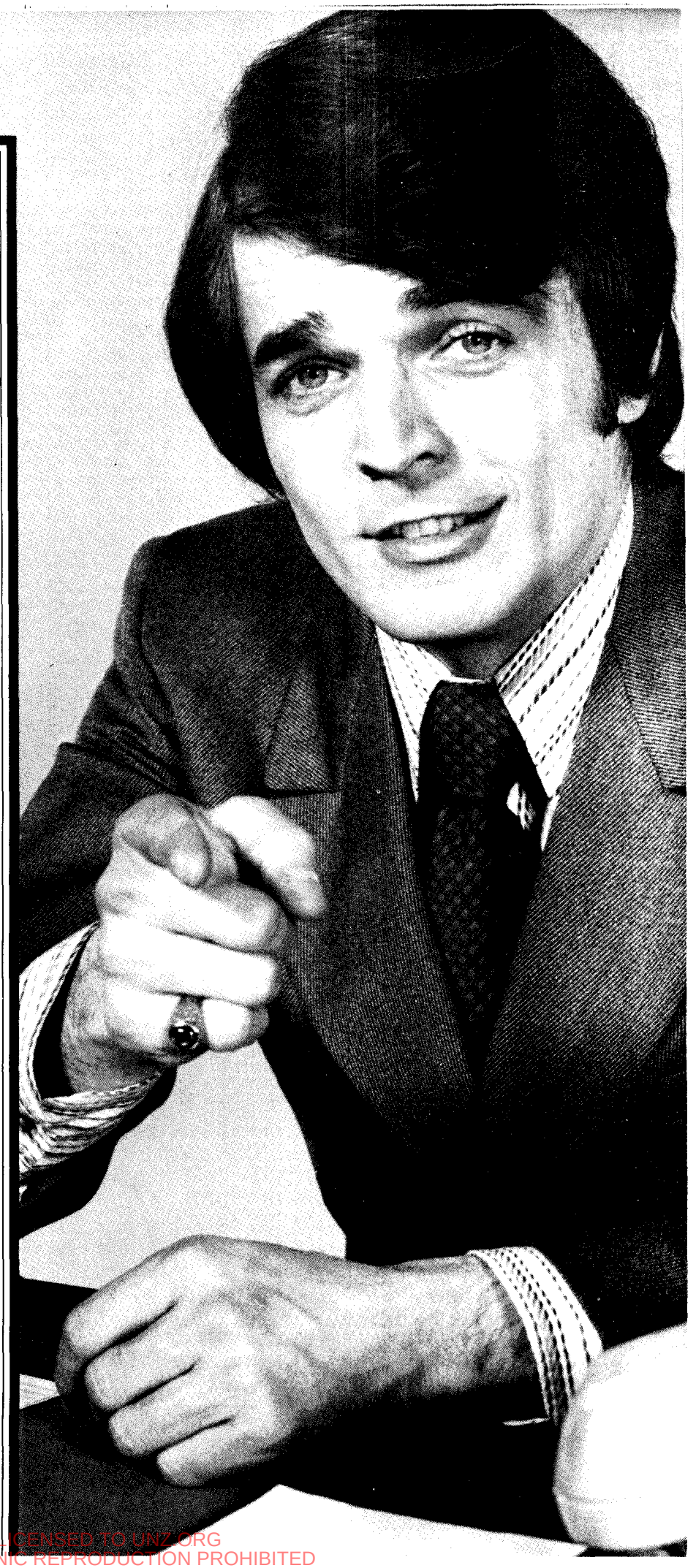

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the answer to what the little individual can do that can't be done by great nations and great enterprises." *Pathways* then encourages the " 'little individual' to join together in the dynamic process of personal and social transformation."

If all of this makes New Age sound like a religion, that's because for many adherents it is. Like most religions, it attempts to address believers' spiritual concerns with the promise of an afterlife (or rather, another life). And it demands that its believers have faith in things that cannot be scientifically proven—channeling, for instance. But there is no God in the New Age church. Rather, god is within everyone, a universal characteristic New Agers sometimes refer to as "god-force" or "pure consciousness." Reaching the god-force within you is easy if you know how to do it, like knowing the combination to a bank vault. And if you don't know how to do it, there are plenty of New Age teachers to show you how—for a price.

The belief certainly lends weight to the idea that the individual is capable of doing anything. By recognizing that "you are God," as MacLaine says, "you can create your own reality." Thus, during the Harmonic Convergence weekend, one convert explained to a *Newsweek* reporter, "Even if the whole thing was made up, just to have thousands or millions of people coming together and envisioning the same thing has power in itself. If it's real or not is something else." MacLaine is at least consistent: she argues that if your reality isn't so great—if you're poor or unemployed—you have only yourself to blame. You have victimized yourself by not living up to your potential. If a Republican said this, he'd be attacked as cruel and selfish, rationalizing his unwillingness to sacrifice for others. When New Agers say it, they congratulate each other on their openness to new ideas and faith in individual potential.

The New Age way is not to deny differences between people, but to deny that they matter. It's an attempt to create an egalitarian society based not on equal distribution of wealth or property, but on spiritual equality—a sort of socialism of the mind. It's an illusion. But for New Agers, even an illusion can become real if you believe in it long enough.

WHY DO so many people find this retreat into individualism so attractive? The truly counterculture New Agers—the hippies of 20 years ago—feel that it enables them to continue to harbor the discontent with middle-class values and the political status quo that they felt during the '60s. (Although the movement does nothing to challenge those realities.) For young people, born in the '60s and '70s, New Age is a concession to Ronald Reagan's success. They believe in progressive social change, but see its 20th-century vehicles—the Democratic Party, labor unions, college campuses—as moribund or apathetic. They don't like Reagan, but don't know how to beat him, so they adopt a philosophy that never mentions him.

New Age is more than anything else the religion of the baby boom, the people aged roughly 25 to 40 who dominate the New Age world. Turned off social activism by the assassination of their heroes, by Vietnam, Watergate, and Reagan, the boomers gave up and went to law school or Wall Street. New Age thought tells them there's nothing wrong with that. For a generation that has abandoned its collective sense of purpose, the idea that individuals can accomplish anything has obvious appeal. They don't have to march in the streets to change the world. They can do that from the comfort of their own couches.

MONEY WITHOUT GUILT—it's the one thing missing in the yuppie lifestyle. New Age gives it to them. Here again New Age language sounds suspiciously like Republican social policy. Economic growth leads to personal growth, and that is always worthwhile. Even better, the pursuit of profit will also take care of social concerns like poverty, hunger, and war. In the New Age lexicon, there is no mention of sacrifice, duty, or responsibility. Those concepts are regressive, unprofitable in any sense.

There is no tension in the New Age between reaping the rewards of capitalism and the desire to help others. Profit, after all, is simply the fulfillment of potential, the byproduct of spiritual harmony. "To be a spiritual person, you should have abundance," MacLaine said in one Seattle seminar, defending her $300-per-person fee.

Not surprisingly, New Age condones big business because New Age *is* big business. In 1986 New Agers spent $100 million on crystals and $300 million on audio and videotapes that instructed them in ways of self-fulfillment. Then there are the hundreds of books and dozens of periodicals devoted to New Age, the seminars held by channelers and hypnotists and self-help groups like "Lifespring," and perhaps most lucrative of all, the music.

Most people by now have heard New Age music, a sort of high-brow version of Muzak its purveyors describe as "soothing," "spiritual," and "peaceful." That's if you like it. If you don't, the words "boring" and "insipid" come to mind. Pianist George Winston was probably the first to popularize the music. Now it's more high-tech, as evidenced by practitioners like synthesizer-wiz Kitaro, a Japanese musician who claims that his moniker (translation: man of love and joy) was given him in, of all unlikely places, high school. In any case, the music is the ultimate metaphor for the movement. It sounds nice and demands nothing of its listeners. There are generally no lyrics that require attention, no discordant notes to jolt one into thought. Upscale retailers love it; it's the perfect sound track for shopping, pleasant but not saccharine. Radio has also picked up on it, with a number of stations switching to a New Age playlist in the last couple of years. "Our advertisers are the kind every other station salivates for," says John Sebastian, the station manager at WBMW, a New Age radio station in Washington. "They're in it because they know there are big dollars out there. These listeners are people who walk into a store with their gold cards and say, 'I want 20 compact discs.' "

But New Agers proclaim that they're not just traditional capitalists. Rather, they've merged liberal political views with the ability to turn a profit. And it's true that New Agers are anti-war, pro-environment, anti-nuke,

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pro-feminist. What makes them different from other liberals is their approach to the resolution of these issues. Instead of seeing them as political concerns that the Democratic Party would support, New Agers completely depoliticize them. Under the guise of non-partisan change, New Agers address issues in ways guaranteed to offend no one. They never tackle issues; they hug them. They apply New Age optimism to problems like poverty and the environment, work to change peoples' attitudes and increase "awareness," and ultimately do nothing but give themselves a warm feeling inside.

ONE EXAMPLE IS a group called Beyond War, founded by the Creative Initiative Foundation in 1982. Beyond War is not just against war; the group claims that war as a "concept" is obsolete. Beyond War's concept, on the other hand, is booming: the group has some 8,000 true believers in the United States and six other countries. That number isn't huge, but it's growing quickly, and many of that 8,000 aren't the type you'd normally associate with peace groups. Beyond War has a knack for successfully wooing people in high places, such as J. W. Marriott, chairman of the Marriott Corporation, or people with good connections, such as Betty Bumpers, wife of Arkansas Senator Dale Bumpers. Both serve on a Beyond War award committee that annually honors someone who has contributed to building a "world beyond war." One recipient: Greek premier Andreas Papandreou.

Beyond War's mandate comes from a 1946 statement by Albert Einstein: "The unleashed power of the atom has changed everything save our modes of thinking and we thus drift toward unparalleled catastrophe." Changing our way of thinking is Beyond War's job. Through its literature, videotapes, seminars, a newsletter, and Beyond War "gatherings" at members' homes, it suggests a three-step process: "KNOWLEDGE, DECISION, ACTION."

To complete the first phase, one must "gain knowledge about our environment" and society's choice between "global life and global death." In part two, "we must then make a decision to choose the path which leads to global life." Easy enough. In the final stage of moving to a world beyond war, individual decisions will be transformed into societal change through "ACTION." What kind of action? Building "understanding that the world is beyond war through a process that does not impose the specific steps of the solution. . . ." And so the process comes full circle. It begins with gaining knowledge and ends with passing the knowledge along to others. Beyond War wants peace—but it's so intent on making friends that it doesn't go so far as to say how peace can be achieved.

But thanks to "research," Beyond War has a theory about its inevitable success. The theory is that once five percent of any group believes in an idea, that idea is "embedded." When the number reaches 20 percent, the idea is "unstoppable." (Try telling this to Walter Mondale.) There's just one problem: no one in Beyond War really seems to know what happens when an idea becomes unstoppable. And what happens if 30 percent of Americans but only 19 percent of Soviets believe that war is obsolete? Since it hasn't hit the magic 20 percent yet, Beyond War is off the hook for now. In the meantime, its advice on the "personal implications" of rejecting war as a concept is to "maintain a spirit of goodwill" and "work together with others to build a world beyond war."

THE NEW AGE take on world hunger isn't much more reassuring. That problem is handled by something called the Hunger Project. The Hunger Project was founded in the late 1970s by est's Erhard. As it states in its newsletter, "A Shift in the Wind," the project's mission is to "generate a new context in which ending hunger could show up as a real possibility, to create an environment in which individuals could perceive, think, decide, plan, and act consistent with the end of hunger."

Like Beyond War, the people with the Hunger Project don't get too specific. They admit that "the Hunger Project never intended to tell people what to do, nor to offer a step-by-step blueprint [to end the problem of hunger]." That would be an imposition, a violation of believers' personal intellectual freedom. After all, why would their ideas for ending hunger be better than anyone else's? And if that's the case, why should they have *any* ideas for ending hunger?

Instead, the Hunger Project focuses on the previously little-discussed mental avenues for ending hunger. It tries to encourage individuals to "take a stand for the end of hunger" by realizing that the "end of hunger is an idea whose time has come." The group knows that because its research led it "to the inescapable conclusion that humanity could no longer make a case for the widespread existence of hunger." Somehow, once that mental bridge is crossed, the end of hunger will be a little bit closer.

The Hunger Project claims to have "enrolled" 5.2 million people. Since enrollment means little more than making "a personal declaration to create the end of the persistence of hunger as an idea whose time has come," the number may not mean much. Still, every one of those people represents someone who might be involved with the issue in a more serious way, but isn't because the Hunger Project says he doesn't need to be. Lester Brown of the WorldWatch Institute told *Mother Jones* magazine that the Hunger Project has "probably collected more money in the name of hunger and done the least about hunger than any group I can think of." Instead, the millions that the Hunger Project raises go mostly into spreading the word according to these New Age gods.

Groups like Beyond War and the Hunger Project embody all that is bad about the New Age. Draped in the sacraments of political correctness, they and other New Agers do nothing to solve the problems they claim to care about. They talk about bringing in a new era for the world, when war and hunger don't exist and people live in harmony, but never make the transition from words to deeds. Maybe one day there will be a New Age on earth—but not if these people can help it. □

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Two for the Road

Here's an interesting test. Think of an actor's name, and see what flashes into your head. When I think "Jack Nicholson," immediately I see a face, hear a voice, sense a feeling. But when I think "Meryl Streep," I think, "Well . . . which picture?" With Nicholson, the immediate recall is person and personality. But it's harder to think of Streep apart from the roles she has played.

Ironweed
(Tri-Star)
The Lonely Passion of Judith Hearne
(Island)

This, heaven knows, doesn't mean that Streep has no personality or that, heaven also knows, Nicholson can't act. Still, there are actors in whom personality and talent are fairly evenly divided (Bette Davis) and others (Alec Guinness) in whom talent predominates. I'm obviously leaving out actors who chiefly sell personality and those who are almost anonymous "character" actors. Some excellent acting—Nicholson has done a lot of it—comes to us through the medium of a strong personality. With Streep, even though there's always contrapuntal pleasure in the presence of Streep herself, the foreground is the woman she is playing.

Oddly, this could make Nicholson seem the lesser of the two. In *Ironweed* both Nicholson and Streep play alcoholic bums (the script's term), and both give performances that originate deep within, that are ruled by truths, not by cliché or exhibitionism. But, to some, Streep might seem to be more successful because we're less aware of Streep. This is unfair to Nicholson. He has a narrower range than his co-star, but within that range, which he keeps trying to widen, he works just as validly. He oughtn't to be rated lower just because of that little game I mentioned at the outset.

Not that their roles in *Ironweed* are so difficult. Extremities of character are easier than subtle shadings. Christine Lahti's role in *Housekeeping* is harder than Streep's here. The two *Ironweed* parts are, for good actors, so easy that they have to be careful: not to score effects but to create people. (Any cutup at a party can "act" a rolling drunk.) Nicholson legitimizes his performance. You can see alcoholic befuddlement along his synapses, you can feel him strain a telltale second or two to focus or to get his legs in motion. As for Streep, whose character comes of a better-bred family than her friend's, you can hear what booze has done to a cultivated voice, you can see the evidence of shame—not apparent in Nicholson—in her twitching mouth and shifty eyes. She can't even look St. Joseph straight in the eye when she prays to him.

Good work from the two stars, then, if not especially taxing for them; but what for? Very little purpose. The whole film is an elaboration of a state that exists when it begins. I'm not among the admirers of William Kennedy's novel, and the screenplay, which he wrote himself, is even less rewarding. Kennedy has kept the silhouette of his story, but, after the inevitable condensation, it lacks much of even the relatively little substance in the book.

Kennedy's Romeo and Juliet of gutters and cheap bars wander—in 1938—around the city where they grew up, Albany, New York. They are long accustomed to seeing cities from the viewpoint of abandoned cars and empty lots. They quarrel and make up; they meet or avoid old friends; Nicholson arbitrarily drops in on his long-forsaken family and as arbitrarily leaves again; some of their fellow bums die; eventually the woman dies; and Nicholson is left to wander on alone. Supposedly implicit in this story is either social-psychological pressure that the pair can't withstand or a scabby integrity in clinging to life at its lowest available level; or both. In my view, neither.

Nicholson is given reasons for his condition, three deaths that he caused; and his background is plentifully daubed in. Streep's character gets less background than his in the novel and even less in the film: we know mainly that she was a musician and comes from middle-class quality. In the novel Kennedy interweaves with moderate skill the phantoms of the man's three victims (though not of the infant son whom he dropped and killed). In the film the phantoms, dressed in white, appear from time to time accompanied by celestial music, as if obeying cues from writer and director. The result is that Nicholson seems patly explained, as though his past has produced logical results; and Streep is in limbo. But both characters are sentimental aggregates of attitudes, rather than individuals.

The director is the overrated Hector Babenco, the Brazilian who made *Pixote*, which gave lachrymose treatment to grim facts, and *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, which was supposed to be a Sartrean drama of politics, prison, and homosexuality but which was only a bag of tricks. Babenco soups up *Ironweed*. First, he brought along the Brazilian cinematographer Lauro Escorel, who gives a golden glow to most of the squalor. Second, possibly with Kennedy's help, Babenco gropes to include the attempted

FILMS WORTH SEEING

The Dead. Anjelica Huston's fine performance comes closest to fulfilling her father's film (his last) of Joyce's story. The rest is respectful but somewhat remote. (Reviewed 12/21/87)

House of Games. Deceit as American ethos is the theme of David Mamet's exceptional script, which he directed. A seemingly realistic but teasingly abstract work. (11/16/87)

Housekeeping. Bill Forsyth, the Scottish director, has dealt magically with Marilynne Robinson's American novel. Giant spirits of the frontier hover above this modern comedy-drama. Christine Lahti excels. (1/18/88)

Sammy and Rosie Get Laid. And London's inner city gets flayed. A cascade of irony, comedy, sex, racial animus, and compassion. Made by the director and the writer of *My Beautiful Laundrette*. (11/30/87)

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lyricism of the novel. For instance, the opening shot is a locomotive at rest. The camera pans up to clouds, then to stars. The locomotive (we learn that Nicholson has done a lot of riding the rails) signifies grim reality, and the next two shots are to assure us that the film has more than grimy goals. These assurances, fruitless, recur; and they help to make *Ironweed* the opposite of a blunt, compassionate film. The lacings of syrup suggest manipulation. In any case, when the film finishes, we're not much further along with Nicholson's character or Streep's than we were after the first 20 minutes.

The Lonely Passion of Judith Hearne is comparable to *Ironweed*: it's almost equally pointless even though there are showcase roles in it. It's adapted from Brian Moore's novel, which is the least of the Moore novels I know—just a predictable toboggan slide. Judith Hearne is a middle-aged spinster who moves into new digs in a boardinghouse. (The film understandably changes the setting from the Belfast of the book to Dublin.) Soon she sets her cap for the landlady's widower brother, just returned from America; and soon, because of disappointments there and otherwise, she relapses into the drinking she had not quite escaped. The end is foreseen so far in advance that the film could end halfway through and still be clear.

Peter Nelson, who adapted the novel for the screen, tried to tack on a happy ending but flubs even this betrayal. Bob Hoskins, the widower, struggles tubbily to give spark and guile to a transparent role. Maggie Smith, who has been a scintillating actress and is still very deft, does exactly what you would expect of her as Judith Hearne. Every move, every inflection seems to have been programmed out of common knowledge, hers and ours. Smith is not mechanical: she is trapped in a trite part.

For the story to grip, it would need to focus, not on the spinster's self-deception about the widower's intent, but on her religious agon. The woman needs faith more than she needs whiskey, but whiskey is easier. Here the religious drama is not central, and the rest is not compelling. During the film Hearne pays several visits to the home of friends—a professor and his family—where she is regarded as a genteel bore. This film is like one of those visits. □

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Tokyo	Airfare Only	$ 627	$ 851
Hong Kong	Airfare Only	$ 660	$ 850
Bahamas Cruise	5 Day Cruise*	$ 385	$ 585
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The meanings of Mannerism.

CLASSICISM AND ITS DISCONTENTS

BY DAVID ROSAND

MANNERISM is a particularly troublesome term in the history and the criticism of art. It seems both necessary and inevitable, a term that had to be invented to account for nearly a century of European art. Between the measured classicism of the High Renaissance and the natural exuberance of the Baroque—between Raphael and Rubens—were styles that declared allegiance to neither alternative, styles marked by a presumed disrespect for the rules of classicism, by an insistent commitment to artifice, to the unnatural and the unexpected, by a preference for the irrational in spatial structure. In Mannerist art, the human figure exceeds normative proportions.

"Rosso Fiorentino:
Drawings, Prints, and Decorative Arts"
The National Gallery of Art

Mannerism: The Crisis of the Renaissance and the Origin of Modern Art
by Arnold Hauser
(Harvard University Press,
688 pp., $19.95 paper)

Elongated and attenuated, it becomes all the more pliable, capable of subjection to the formal distortions of a willful art. And yet out of this matrix of the artificial and the formal, the unnatural and the abstract, came an art of powerful personal expression, of great affect.

It is hardly fortuitous that Mannerism was discovered—invented, perhaps—by the critical generation that witnessed the rise of 20th-century Expressionism and abstraction. What had previously been considered a decline in art following the classical perfection of the High Renaissance could be seen, when viewed positively, as a genuinely creative achievement—not a failure to follow the rules and norms of classicism, but rather a deliberate rejection of those standards, a willed anti-classicism.

This was the thesis of Walter Friedlaender's inaugural lecture at the University of Freiburg in 1914, which sounded one of the earliest critical defenses of the art of Jacopo Pontormo and Rosso Fiorentino:

> The mannerist artist, in the last analysis, has the right or duty to employ any possible method of observation only as the basis for a new free representational variant. It, in turn, is distinguished in principle from all other possibilities of seeing an object, for it is neither made valid by any standardized abstraction nor is it casually determined in an optical way, but answers only to its own conditions. This art too is idealistic, but it does not rest on an idea of a canon, rather upon a "fantastica idea non appogiata all'imitazione," an imaginative idea unsupported by imitation of nature.

Friedlaender recognized the choice involved, the refusal to test formal invention against either the norm of nature or the normative ideal of classicism. *Fantasia* validated itself:

> Thus the canon apparently given by nature and hence generally recognized as law is definitively given up. It is no longer a question of creating a seen object in an artistically new way, "just as one sees it," or, if idealistically heightened and ethically stressed, "just as one ought to see it." Neither is it a matter of recreating the object "as I see it," as the individual person observes it as a form of appearance. Rather, if one may use a negative expression, it is to be recreated "as one does not see it," but as from purely autonomous artistic motives, one would have it seen.

The critical revaluation of Mannerism recognized the artist's freedom to assert his own values, to choose his own way; it is no wonder that Mannerism received a most sympathetic reception in the early 20th century. Friedlaender's probing of expressive structure in the work of Pontormo, Rosso, and Parmigianino operated essentially on the level of formal analysis. But this sensitive reading of pictorial form raised questions of artistic intention and revealed deeper dimensions of experience within the paintings. Other critics and historians asked about the large implications of this phenomenon, and especially about its causes. At the level of pure style, periods of classicism were perceived as inherently unstable: as moments of perfection, but transient, subject to inevitable change.

More important, the reasons for that particular instability at this particular moment were sought in history. The balanced classicism that was so seriously disrupted had achieved its most heroic expression in High Renaissance Rome, the spiritual and political center of Western Christendom, in the first two decades of the 16th century. Such disruption of artistic style, it was assumed, could only be a reflection of more profound upheavals in society—of the Protestant reaction to the Roman Catholic Church, including its aesthetic ambitions, the Sack of Rome in 1527, the Council of Trent, and the Counter-Reformation. Mannerism in art was the visual manifestation of a larger spiritual crisis; in the intensity of its figural language could be seen the anxieties of an age. In such a light, El Greco emerged as the leading representative, an Expressionist *avant la lettre*.

Although an intellectual product of the period following World War I, this view received its broadest synthetic statement as late as 1965, in Arnold Hauser's *Mannerism: The Crisis of the Renaissance and the Origin of Modern Art*, now reissued by Harvard University Press. Hauser's subtitle, making explicit what had been tacitly assumed, suggests the farthest reach of critical momentum. The book ranges from the "disintegration of the Renaissance" in the 16th century to Surrealism and Kafka in our own. For Hauser, Mannerism transcends its historical moment to serve as the very rubric for paradox and anxiety, and, in Hauser's Marxist perception, for alienation. The Mannerist artist is one who stands in a tense relationship to his social context; and that tension, locating the artist outside the center, at the fringes of society, enables him to register the tensions of the center itself with poignant precision.

Even then, however, some 22 years ago, Hauser's was the voice of an older generation. His view of Mannerism was already being repudiated by younger, more professional art historians. Their revisionism was predicated on a different reading of the same dialectical phenomenon: the tension between High Renaissance classicism and what immediately followed. Instead of investing that classicism with values of great social import, with values implying an impossible ideal of human aspiration, the new

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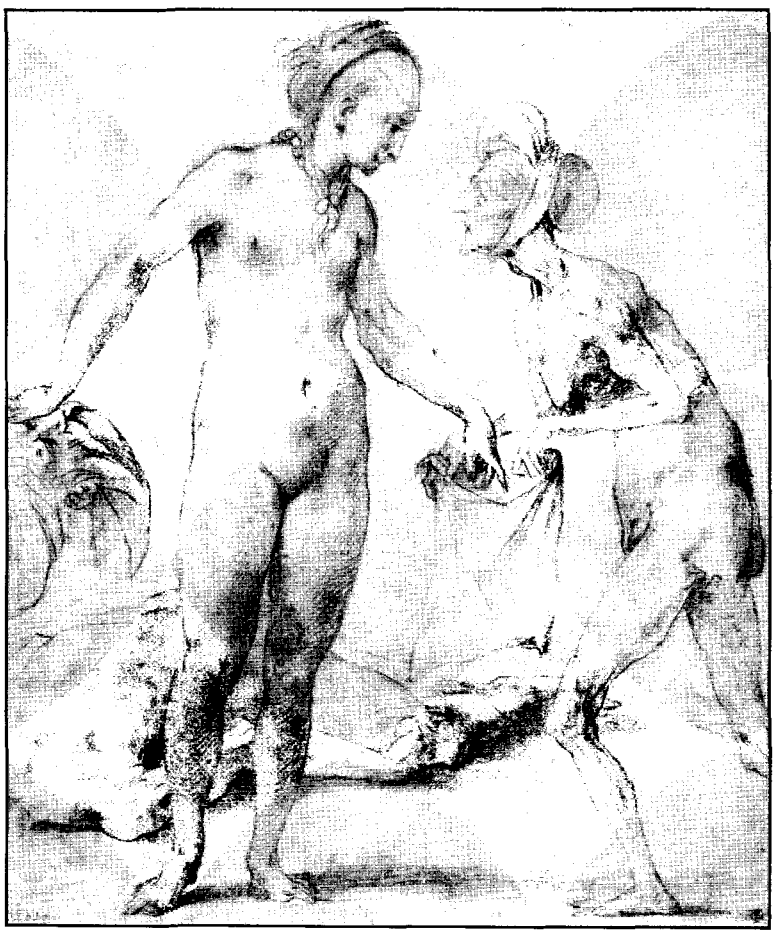
view more narrowly stressed the liberation of the very notion of style as an achievement of classicism, which in turn involved the notion of artistic invention: the artist's creative freedom was seen as a product of the Renaissance itself.

Thus the generation of artists that followed, the young Mannerists, did not rebel against the classicism of their masters. They could be understood, instead, to owe the very premises of their art to them. The etymology of the term Mannerism—from *maniera*, or style—was invoked to remind us that style itself was the central issue. What to the earlier art historians had appeared as a desperate assertion of the self was now viewed in a more normative aesthetic context: the rules of art required just such play with art itself.

The assertion of an individual *maniera* was a demonstration of the artist's powers of invention, of his knowledge of those very rules. Mannerism, in John Shearman's words, was a "stylish style," an art about art, an understandable extension of the aesthetic momentum of the High Renaissance. Instead of looking to the spiritual crises of the religious or political realm, critics turned for guidance to more strictly cultural phenomena, to the models of rhetoric and the ideals of social comportment. *Sprezzatura*, the word coined by Baldassare Castiglione in the *Book of the Courtier* and only roughly translatable as "nonchalance," offered a key to the interpretation of this self-demonstrative art. The standards of critical comprehension were no longer psychological but aesthetic; El Greco, according to the thesis of the memorable Toledo exhibition of 1982, was not an Expressionist, but a learned academician in the Renaissance tradition.

Such considerations form the background to the exhibition at the National Gallery of Art, "Rosso Fiorentino: Drawings, Prints, and Decorative Arts." As its title indicates, the exhibition stresses the graphic arts. The absence of paintings is understandable, since most of Rosso's either are on wood panel, and therefore too fragile to travel, or are wall frescoes. Thus we are deprived of one of the fundamental aspects of the art of this Florentine, his creative brilliance as a colorist. He was a painter who modeled with color. Like his contemporary, Pontormo, and the slightly older Andrea del Sarto, Rosso (1495-1540) developed a palette of acerb sensibility and sophistication. Assigning to color great weight, he sought a sharpness of chromatic value; in his painting color carries expressive as well as constructive responsibility.



JUDITH AND HOLOFERNES, 1540

Most of Rosso's works on view, then, are of small scale. The exceptions, however, are truly extraordinary. They include two of the tapestries woven after Rosso's decorations in the Gallery of Francis I at Fontainebleau, very possibly intended as gifts to the Emperor Charles V (lent by the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna). Depicting the *Death of Adonis* and *Cleobis and Biton* (the pious sons who pulled the chariot of their mother to the temple of Juno), these mural coverings woven of gold, silver, and silk threads are remarkably well preserved; their dazzling richness of color and texture makes an overwhelming impression. The third large image in the show is a cartoon after Michelangelo's design of *Leda and the Swan*; measuring five-and-a-half by eight feet, this monumental drawing (from the Royal Academy of Arts in London) executed in black chalk serves as a fitting climax to the installation at the National Gallery, and reminds us of the ambitions of Italian *disegno* in the Renaissance.

Disegno (translatable as both "drawing" in the narrowly technical sense and "design" in the broader meaning of composition) was the central aesthetic virtue in Florentine painting. Rosso's achievement as a colorist depended in a fundamental way on his brilliance as a draftsman. His faceting of form into planes, each inflecting a common chromatic base, builds on an underlying clarity of graphic structure; each unit of color is contained within precisely and sharply defined contours. In a general sense, this system sustains all painting in the Florentine tradition, but Rosso tightened it, so that outlines acquired a wiry tensility. In drawing the figure—the highest challenge in this art—that line, tuned at times beyond tolerable pitch, can produce an expressive tension all its own.

Technique—more precisely, the dialectic between drawing and coloring—is indeed a key to the affect of Rosso's art. Seeing an altarpiece in progress, one early patron fled the room, fearing that the painter had transformed angels into devils. Giorgio Vasari, the 16th-century biographer who is the source of this anecdote, chastises the patron for not understanding the ways of art. When Rosso first sketched in his figures, Vasari explains, he would give them a "certain harsh and desperate appearance," which, however, he would then "sweeten and reduce to perfection." Vasari's apology notwithstanding, we still feel the affective power of the graphic sharpness underlying Rosso's

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colored surfaces, the skeletal structures over which he stretched membranes of color—particularly in a late unfinished panel such as the *Madonna and Child with St. Anne and St. John the Baptist* in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (not in the exhibition).

That quality, an exaggeration of the traditional Florentine value of *disegno*, informs Rosso's work in varying degrees throughout his career. It is evident in his design for an *Allegory of Death and Fame*, engraved in 1517 by Agostino Veneziano. Here the close study of anatomy leads to the dramatic presentation of *écorché* figures: the human body reduced to its skeletal and muscular essence. This macabre composition, whatever its moralizing message, represents a triumph of Rosso's inventive powers; he has choreographed a group of bodies into a significant visual statement, an image of raw rhetorical appeal. Anatomical knowledge was the sine qua non of Renaissance *disegno*. Modern anatomical study of the human body was initiated not by medical professionals, but by artists in late 15th-century Florence who were able to record what they observed. For Rosso, as for his contemporaries, the human figure was the exclusive term of art, its unique and singular expressive element.

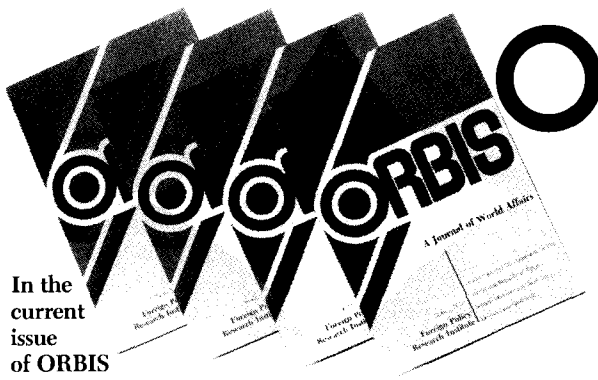
In this Rosso clearly continued the concerns of his High Renaissance mentors. His art aims at demonstrating its virtuosity in posing and composing the human body, and the iconography of his several series designed to be reproduced as engravings seems chosen as the ideal vehicle for such demonstration: the heroic exploits of Hercules, the series of the Olympian gods in niches, the loves of the gods, the single (unfinished) plate of the *Battle of the Romans and the Sabines*. Raphael himself had established the example, demonstrating and disseminating his own eloquent figural art in designs engraved by Marcantonio Raimondi; and he in turn was following the lead of earlier masters like Andrea Mantegna and Antonio Pollaiuolo. Figural composition was at the core of this Renaissance tradition.

And yet Rosso's individual figures emerge to declare their own physiognomic independence. Whether flayed by some anatomical imperative as in the engraved allegory, or emaciated by age (the desiccated hag appears often in his imagery), these bodies deprive us of any possibility of untroubled delight in the flesh. Even when juxtaposed to a nubile nude of evident appeal, as in the drawing of *Judith and Holofernes*, the indicting skeleton of hanging flesh (here the Jewish heroine's accomplice nurse) cannot but recall the inevitable decay of youth and beauty. It is a memento mori. Just this easy move from form to content, from the aesthetic to the moralizing, suggests how difficult it is to separate the two in this figural language. The body speaks—of itself, but its resonance is greater still. Sixteenth-century treatises spoke of "corporal eloquence." *That* is what this art is about.

Raphael's figures may be different in their eloquence, more deliberately controlled and also more varied in social function, but eloquence is nonetheless what they share with those of Rosso. This continuity of figural language is what seemed to undermine the thesis of an anti-classical Mannerism. And the figure itself manifests its critical role as the carrier of meaning. The degree to which posture assumes the status of sign is confirmed by Rosso's translation of the body of the dying Adonis into that of the dead Christ: that translation depends on the pathetic structure of the pose, its ability to embody certain affective values, to carry them independently of immediate narrative context, however that context may have served to establish them in the first place. Nor should we see in this kind of transference a mere aestheticism, a severing of form from content, a matter of pure *maniera*; this figure, charged with affect, retains that significance in its new setting. Exaggerated the postures may be, but we respond with feeling. The purpose of rhetoric, we recall, is to move an audience.

THE TERM Mannerism does not occur in the text of Eugene Carroll's catalog, which represents the latest scholarship on Rosso—mostly, it should be noted, the results of his own research. We are presented with an artist whose career ran a rather unstable course: beginning in Florence, developing outside the metropolitan center; leading to Rome and escape from the Sack of 1527; more or less itinerant years ending in France in 1530, and a decade of honored service at the court of Francis I, especially at Fontainebleau, where he established, along with Primaticcio, the decorative and figural style that would mark French art for the rest of the century. Apparently he was successful in every way.

But in 1540 he took his own life. Ac-



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cording to Vasari, having falsely accused a colleague of stealing money from him, Rosso committed suicide in shame and fear. Carroll does not make much of this event, although he accepts it as somehow congruent with the "dichotomy of the private intentions of his art and the expectation and need for a public manner." The acknowledgment of such a tension returns us to Mannerism as a critical issue. Sensing, as we do, a private urgency in so much of Rosso's imagery, an urgency expressed by his creatures and by his own mode of realizing them, we must wonder about the relationship of that privacy to the public demands of patronage. Does that dichotomy between the individual and society in fact confirm the alienation posited by Hauser as an essential component of Mannerism?

Art historical scholarship has tended to normalize artists like Rosso, to read their social standing and function as signs of an easy solidarity with their surroundings. Documents of patronage do tend to support such a reading. But scholarship and criticism may have abandoned for too long other dimensions of inquiry—in particular, the complexities of biography. We are able to establish the external facts of a life; we can document the works, determine the interpretive keys to the public meaning of images; but we seem reluctant to probe the inner life, to consider the psychic forces behind the creation of those images. We tend not to trust our own perceptions of human conflict in the work. This reluctance to enter psychic realms of centuries past is understandable. Still, it has cut us off from deeper access to the life of art. Rosso may not speak for a crisis of his age, but the nervous tension of his work still grates, and we ignore that challenge only by a willful escape into the safety of art history.

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AWAKENINGS

Shifting Landscape
by Henry Roth

(Jewish Publication Society, 301 pp., $19.95)

Call It Sleep
by Henry Roth

(Avon, 447 pp., $4.95)

The haunting question about Henry Roth remains his half century of silence after the publication of *Call It Sleep* in 1934. *Call It Sleep*, which, as I have just discovered, is one of those rare books that actually improves with rereading, exhibits the perfect pitch of genius in all the play of its invention and stylistic energy; it clearly belongs among the few great American novels of the 20th century. But this was not a case, as happens frequently enough, of a promising or even brilliant first novel that has no sequel because its author runs out of steam, because he has said the one thing he had to say. If this was Roth's *Portrait of the Artist* (As a Young Boy, for the protagonist, David Schearl, is seven when most of the action occurs), what happened to the *Ulysses* toward which the prodigious imaginative power of the large first novel seems to be moving?

Roth himself—he is now 81—has also been haunted by his own silence, as he repeatedly makes clear in *Shifting Landscape*, a collection of all his published short pieces from 1925 to 1987, assembled by Mario Materassi, his Italian translator and devoted friend. Materassi has helpfully prefaced each of the pieces with generous excerpts from Roth's correspondence, from taped conversations, from the many interviews Roth has given since 1964, when the meteoric success of the paperback reissue of his novel plucked him from the obscurity of his life as a waterfowl farmer in rural Maine. This new volume, then, gives us everything Roth has put into print beyond *Call It Sleep*. It provides the outlines of a spiritual autobiography.

The pieces exhibit the flickerings of an enormous talent, but scarcely any of them transcends the slightness of a fic-

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tional sketch or exercise. Between 1935 and 1940, Roth wrote about 100 pages of a proletarian novel, which he subsequently destroyed (one published chapter survives and appears in *Shifting Landscapes*), and three deliberately commercial stories. A state of depression marked the beginning of a total writer's block—even letter-writing, he confesses, became painfully threatening—that continued for a decade and a half.

Roth made his first tentative efforts to write fiction again in the later '50s, and the acclaim and income from the paperback *Call It Sleep* (over a million copies were sold) encouraged him to more sustained work. So far nothing substantial from this later period is visible, though in the last few years Roth has completed a thousand-page manuscript of a book he calls a "memoir-form novel," *Mercy of a Rude Stream*. (The title is from Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*.) He is apparently unwilling to have it published in his lifetime; the two excerpts included in the Materassi volume look intriguing, but they give little sense of what the shape or quality of the whole is like.

FOR THE MOST part, Roth is his own severest critic on the subject of his deflected career. "I am hung with the albatross of myself," he writes to Materassi in 1964. The one partial exception to this severity is the attempt, made several times in interviews and in written remarks, to explain his withdrawal from literature as symptomatic of a whole generation of writers who never realized the brilliance of their initial promise. The explanation is not altogether persuasive. There is a big difference between decline and silence; and it is the former that applies to most of the writers Roth seems to have in mind. (Among those he mentions are John Steinbeck, James Farrell, Edward Dahlberg, and Daniel Fuchs.) And there is an even bigger difference between dissipated talent and the poignant plight (Roth's own) of aborted genius.

There is one clear and compelling reason for Roth's silence. It is his joining the Communist Party in 1933, even as he was completing *Call It Sleep*. That political act very rapidly impaired him as a writer, though its consequences, as I shall explain, would have certain retrospective complications. His novel's lyric immersion in the experience of childhood soon came to seem to him a throwback to the apolitical aestheticism of the 1920s, when the book was first conceived; he was made to feel a degree of bad conscience about his own achievement, earnestly aspiring instead to produce fiction that would embody revolutionary awareness. This aspiration, as he now says, violated all his inclinations as a writer, which were to the sensual, the personal, the visionary, the perverse. "Allegiance once deeply inhaled," he notes grimly in a letter written in 1968, "was as lethal as carbon monoxide."

ODDLY ENOUGH, Roth is as vehement about James Joyce as about the Communist Party. Clearly it was the example of Joyce that galvanized his talent as a writer. Indeed, *Call It Sleep* is, together with *The Sound and the Fury*, which appeared five years earlier, the fullest American assimilation of Joyce; and, unlike Faulkner's novel, it is thematically consonant with Joyce as well as technically imitative of him. Roth's present quarrel with Joyce is not over technique, but over an ideal of artistic identity. He now dismisses the Joycean motto of *silence, exile, cunning* as "specious claptrap," and denounces the direction of "monstrous detachment and artistic autonomy" to which Joyce's enterprise points. Roth's recent concentration on a large memoir-form novel is an effort to place his actual life-experience squarely under fictional scrutiny, eschewing all Joycean pretense that the writer stands outside his work like a god, coolly paring his fingernails.

The ultimate source of Roth's vehemence toward Joyce, however, is something he has since discovered about himself—that he is a writer who needs to be deeply rooted in a particular culture with its distinctive complex of symbols. Though Joyce's point of departure was just such a connection with Irish culture, he moved toward an ideal of universal art that would integrate all cultures, working from a condition of self-imposed exile. *Call It Sleep* exhibits a productive tension in this regard. The author's intimate knowledge of the life of Jewish immigrants on the East Side, circa 1913, is masterfully evident on every page. It is a knowledge that is unsparing, affectionate, absolutely unsentimental. At the same time, the child protagonist pursues an essentially private visionary prospect (though partly by means of language and lore made available to him by his culture); had Roth written the sequel about David Schearl's adolescence and young manhood, the sequel that he says he ought to have written, the protagonist would no doubt have detached himself entirely from the world of his origins and realized his identity as an American Stephen Dedalus in the cosmopolitan realm of art.

In fact, this route was not psychologically viable for Roth. One might even wonder whether the Party's ideal of universal revolutionary solidarity, however illusory, was not an alternative family and culture for him, a substitute for the Jewish ones he felt he had to put behind him. Now, in the retrospection of old age, Roth appears to view Joyce as a kind of mirage that led him out into the wilderness of proudly autonomous art from which he fled, only to fall into the lethal air of Communist allegiance.

This perspective on his own experience was fixed for him not by the success of 1964, but, surprisingly, by the Six-Day War of 1967. Roth had severed all his Jewish ties, even declaring in a symposium in 1963 that the greatest boon that Jews could now confer on humanity would be to cease being Jews. But in the threat to Israel's survival in the spring of 1967, Roth suddenly discovered himself profoundly involved in the fate of the Jewish state, despite vestigial radical promptings that he ought to be siding with the Arabs. He has not, he says, become a Zionist, at least not in any official sense; but the idea of a new, secular Jewish culture under the conditions of political autonomy, and the identification with Israel, have become central to his imaginative life. In 1971 he announced that he had "adopted" Israel "as a symbolic home, one where symbols can lodge, whatever it is in actuality." Perhaps we will not be able to understand what precisely this means until we can read *Mercy of a Rude Stream* in its entirety, if then; but the identification with Israel seems to have liberated Roth from his sense of crippling isolation, to have made it possible for him to write again, after Joyce and contra Joyce.

YET no reader of *Call It Sleep* will regret its Joycean inspiration. Formally, the novel interweaves the predominant technique of *Ulysses* with that of *Portrait of the Artist*. There are, that is, brief stream-of-consciousness passages in which a staccato sequence of highly elliptical sentences and the repeated tag ends of fragmentary phrases are used to convey the dramatic immediacy, the groping confusion, at times the sheer panic, of a child's inner experience. The more pervasive technique, however, is that of the earlier Joyce. A finely articulate narrator, almost

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always adhering to the emotional and conceptual viewpoint of the protagonist, conveys that viewpoint in a wrought lyric language that would not be available to the protagonist himself.

Let me illustrate the nature of the connection between the two writers by juxtaposing passages from their novels that deal with similar subjects. Toward the end of *Portrait*, Stephen stands on the steps of the library watching a flock of birds wheel above him, "their dark darting quivering bodies flying clearly against the sky as against a limp hung cloth of tenuous blue." After watching, he listens to the cry of the birds, which sounds to him like the squeaking of mice. The simile, however, is too humble for his taste, as in a moment he will see in the birds a symbol or augury of his own fate:

> But the notes were long and shrill and whirring, unlike the cry of vermin, falling a third or a fourth and trilled as the flying beaks clove the air. Their cry was shrill and clear and fine and falling like threads of silken light unwound from whirring spools.

In the last of the four sections of *Call It Sleep*, David daringly climbs to the roof of his tenement building for the first time, and suddenly finds himself in a world of dazzling immensities, under "the blinding whorl of the sun." From the quiet of his lofty vantage he looks all around:

> And about were roof-tops, tarred and red and sunlit and red, roof-tops to the scarred horizon. Flocks of pigeons wheeled. Where they flew in lower air, they hung like a poised and never-raveling smoke; nearer at hand and higher, they glittered like rippling water in the sun.

Of course I do not mean to suggest that Roth was specifically imitating Joyce's rendering of bird-flight when he wrote these sentences. But the similarity of the object of description points up the stylistic bond between the two writers. The best literary influence is a kind of alchemy, as here Roth picks up from Joyce a certain incantatory rhythm, the strategic use of simile, and the lyric possibilities of certain kinds of simile (note the intriguing affinity between "a limp hung cloth of tenuous blue" and "they hung like a poised and never-raveling smoke"), and fuses them into the secret cellular structure of his own prose, his own fictional world. For the child David, in contrast to the self-conscious late-adolescent Stephen, the birds are not augury or emblem, they are the immediate objects of wondering attention; and yet Roth could not have made his hero see so well without the example of Joyce.

TECHNIQUE is not easily separable, however, from literary ideology, and in this regard Roth's sense of vocation, and of the thematic embodiment of vocation, was kindled by Joyce. I have in mind particularly the orientation of fiction toward what Joyce liked to call "epiphany," the revelation of meaning and purpose for the character (and, implicitly, for the reader) in a moment of illuminating vision, when everything comes together. The most spectacular epiphany in *Call It Sleep*, of course, is the awesome moment near the end, when David thrusts a milk dipper into the third rail and experiences a surge of cosmic power through every cell, as he is flung between life and death.

But there are more delicate epiphanies earlier in the novel, including an exquisite one that should be mentioned for its Joycean associations of water and vision. In one of the most famous passages in *Portrait*, Stephen sees a lovely young girl, her skirt hitched up to her waist, wading in the Liffey. He immediately casts her as angel and omen in his private mythology of a poet in the making, and is inflamed with ecstasy. Near the end of Book III of *Call It Sleep*, David, having been sent out to burn the crumbs of leaven on the morning before Passover, ends up on the wharfs, looking out over the East River. He has been much preoccupied with the passage from the sixth chapter of Isaiah that he has encountered in Hebrew school, in which the Lord appears before the prophet effulgent on his throne and an angel touches the prophet's lips with a livid coal to cleanse them of their impurity. In this case, the writing does not sound much like the corresponding epiphany in *Portrait* (which is a good deal more effusive and pre-Raphaelite in cast), but the Joycean moment might be viewed as a kind of matrix for the vision accorded Roth's protagonist:

> His gaze shifted to the left. As the cloud began to pass, a long slim lathe of sunlight burned silver on the water—
>
> —Gee, didn't see before!
>
> Widened to a swath, a lane, widened.
>
> —Like a ship just went.
>
> A plain, flawless, sheer as foil to the serried margins. His eyes dazzled.
>
> Fire on the water. White.
>
> His lids grew heavy.
>
> —In the water she said. White. Brighter than day. Whiter. And He was.
>
> Minutes passed while he stared. The brilliance was hypnotic. He could not take his eyes away. His spirit yielded, melted into light. In the molten sheen memories and objects overlapped. Smokestacks fused to palings flickering in silence by. Pale lathes grew gray, turned dusky, contracted and in the swimming dimness, he saw sparse teeth that gnawed upon a lip; and ladders on the ground turned into hasty fingers pressing on a thigh and again smokestacks. Straight in air they stood a moment, only to fall on silvered corrugating brilliance. And he heard the rubbing on a wash-board and the splashing suds, smelled again the acrid soap and a voice

GARMENTS

Now the sun's yellow smock is falling again
from the heavens. It is night. The nurse
is taking off her white uniform,
the policeman is tearing off his badge
and his blue hat, the doctor
is silently pulling the stethoscope
from around his neck. Slowly, button
by terrible button, people are undoing
the chrysalis of quotidian robes—
the dentist unfastening his plaque-ridden bib,
the chimney sweep flinging his soot-drenched shirt
into a corner, the bellhop emptying money
from his beleaguered pockets. The boards
of the world's floors grow heavy again
with a huge flotsam of bankers' suits,
the unleavened airiness of dancers' leotards.
Even the President we have all loved
for the sheer tedium of his sartorial sense,
yes, even he is returning his body now
to the high ornament of its original suit,
even the talk-show host is unclipping
the microphone from his lapel, the seductress
peeling the frilled underwear from her body
by her own hand. We are becoming, like it
or not, a kind of democracy. We are all
growing equal beneath the naked moon.
We are all going to sleep, now, in the same bed.

MICHAEL BLUMENTHAL

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> speaking words that opened like the bands of a burnished silver accordion—Brighter than day . . . Brighter . . . Sin melted into light . . .

Technically, this extraordinary moment could be described as Joyce doubled back on himself. The thematic juncture of privileged vision looking out over the water recalls *Portrait*. The musically lyric narration, with little fragments of stream of consciousness (typographically marked by introductory dashes), invokes the opening, or Telemachus, section of *Ulysses*. The scattering of crude details of tenement life, including a sexual image, in David's gyrating free associations, recalls the earthy realism of the Bloom sections of *Ulysses*, so unlike the vaporous poetic diction and perception of Stephen's world in *Portrait*. In 1960 Leslie Fiedler sought to explain this combination in *Call It Sleep* of pungent naturalism and visionary transport by invoking C. M. Doughty's epigram, "The Semites are like to a man sitting in a cloaca to the eyes, and whose brows touch heaven." But one hardly needs such canards about racial imagination to explain the marriage of opposites in Roth: it is already abundantly present in *Ulysses*, where Bloom (a Semite, to be sure, but conceived in a most Hibernian imagination) sits in the privy dreaming of sunbursts of paradisiacal splendor in a land to the East.

ROTH'S ALCHEMIC transmutation of Joyce has to do less with the application of the Irish writer's methods to Jewish materials (David's switch-wielding *kheyder* rabbi in place of Stephen's punitive Jesuit masters) than with the peculiarly American resonances of his prose, of his whole imaginative enterprise. At a time when European novelists were creating classics of realism, a central tradition of American literature was producing (as D. H. Lawrence and others came to recognize) works of a potently mythic character. Joyce's three novels abound, of course, in mythological elements, but these are brought into play through an elaborate exercise of learned allusion. What I think Roth draws from an American matrix is his primary imagination of mythic drama, even without recourse to allusion, in his handling of realistic materials. He is not a mythological writer, like Joyce, but a mythographic one, like Melville.

This quality is felt, for a start, in certain recurrent traits of style. If Roth often displays a mood-painting delicacy reminiscent of the earlier Joyce ("The body was aware of a lyric indolence, a golden lolling within itself"), his language even more frequently evinces an explosive power of hyperbole that enlarges and violently transforms the experiences it describes. Here is David falling down a flight of stairs into a cellar:

> Then darkness, swirling and savage, caught him like a wind of stone, pitched him spinning among palpable drum-beats, engulfed him in a brawling welter of ruined shapes—that parted—and he plunged down a wailing fathomless shaft. A streak of flame—and screaming nothingness.

It does not suffice to say that the language here catches the immediacy of the tumbling child's terror; what it also does is to make a fall down a set of stairs into a gripping intimation of the apocalypse. Prose like this ("caught him like a wind of stone") was scarcely written in English before *Moby Dick*. Roth, in his novel, does it again, just as well as the 19th-century master. Thus, at the center of David's great vision when he jams the dipper into the third rail are two sentences—like the whole vision, set out in italics as verse—that are pre-eminently Melvillian in their vigor of metaphoric invention, their muscular rhythm, their insistent force of hyperbole, their cosmic sweep:

> *The hawk of radiance raking him with talons of fire, battering his skull with a beak of fire, braying his body with pinions of intolerable light. And he writhed without motion in the clutch of a fatal glory, and his brain swelled and dilated till it dwarfed the galaxies in a bubble of refulgence—*

THERE IS AN obvious Oedipal triangle at the center of *Call It Sleep*, complete with Freudian Family Romance in the ambiguous suggestion that David may not be his father's child. What makes this representation of paternal hatred, maternal love, filial fear and desire utterly compelling is that the stuff of psychology has been transformed into the drama of myth. This transformation is in perfect keeping with a child's perspective, in which parents loom as large as the world, and life and death are at stake in a father's threat, a mother's kiss.

From the very first sentence, the father, with his "grim smouldering face," is like some titanic figure that has surged out of the archaic imagination, always threatening, never changing. He is repeatedly associated with motifs of upraised hammers, whips, bull's horns, volcanic fury. He is all knotted muscularity, phallic hardness, a man of stone. David's perception of his father standing over him after whipping him succinctly illustrates how faithfulness to the child's psychology moves the figure perceived into the realm of myth: "David's father towered above him, rage billowing from him, shimmering in sunlight almost, like an aura."

CALL IT SLEEP, for all its beautifully limned realistic detail, is a novel that constantly pushes toward an order of meaning beyond the social and historical spheres—another quality that could not have endeared the book to the readers of *The New Masses* in 1934. This movement beyond is perhaps most vividly evident in Roth's English treatment of Yiddish dialogue. It has often been observed that Roth illustrates the linguistic predicament of the immigrants by giving them a finely articulate language when they are speaking in their native tongue, which stands in contrast both to their painfully hobbled, imperfect English and to the crude street-urchin's argot their children speak to each other.

But this is an incomplete description of what Roth accomplishes in the dialogues. The English that Roth lends his characters is more formal, more decorous and elevated, than the Yiddish they would actually have been speaking. A common colloquial expression for feeling sudden despair, *es iz mir finster gevoren oif di oigen*, through a slight modification of diction and word order, assumes a Shakespearean dignity, even falling into an iambic cadence: "The light before my eyes grew black!" The familiar Yiddish reference to a son as a *kadish* is transmuted into something strange and vaguely sinister when the father says, "And that over there is what will pray for me after my death." Above all, the famous Yiddish gift for invective is translated from fishwives' curses into a kind of poetry of resonant wrath—in the mouth of the rabbi, of David's outrageous Aunt Bertha, and, above all, in the mouth of the menacing father: "Curse him and his gifts! . . . May he burn with them! God bray him into bits!" Finally, then, this is not mimetic dialogue, but the speech of a personage in a dramatic prose-poem.

It is not a character in Sholem Aleichem who talks like this, but Melville's Ahab, raging in a state of virtual demonic possession against whale and God and man and life itself. Those cadences, that posture, can be heard again and again in the language of Albert Schearl, which is neither Yiddish nor

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colloquial English, but, like Melville's, a diction at once tragic and epic: "Nothing fulfills itself with me! It's all doomed!" And in his incandescent fury, when he thinks he has found out David's illegitimacy, he thunders with a 17th-century grandeur: "That's hers! Her spawn! Mark me! Hers! . . . Three years I throttled surmise, I was the beast of burden! Good fortune I never met! Happiness never! Joy never!"

It is possible to think of Albert Schearl in realistic terms as a study in psychopathology. The sweep of his language, however, and its signification, in dialogue and in narration, constantly invite us to see all of the figures in this family constellation, again in keeping with some of the classics of American literature, as images of humanity facing the absolute ultimacy of existence: the father seething with resentment against life, inwardly gnawed at by an unquenchable sense of inadequacy, avenging himself with the brute force of arbitrary authority; the mother dreaming of a lost love that was impossible from the start, and giving herself, like the gift of grace in a doomed world, to her cherished child; the boy lifting his mind toward a horizon of perfect brilliance beyond the grimy existence where fathers whip, other children mock, and tenement cellars swarm with rats and vague unspeakable terrors.

In all this, mastery speaks from every page of *Call It Sleep*, persuading us that its achievement could not have been a fluke. Perhaps we may yet see an answering mastery, in a different fictional mode, when *Mercy of a Rude Stream* is placed before the public. But even if that never happens, this single luminous book will have assured its author a place among the American novelists whose work will not perish.

ROBERT ALTER

Robert Alter is co-editor, with Frank Kermode, of *The Literary Guide to the Bible* (Harvard University Press).

THE POET AS TOADY

An Arrow in the Wall: Selected Poetry and Prose by Andrei Voznesensky edited by William Jay Smith and F. D. Reeve

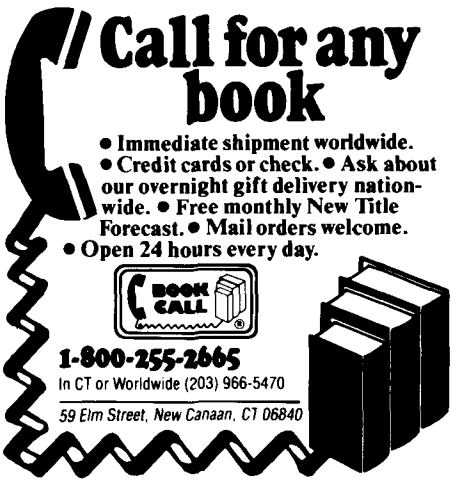
(Henry Holt, 344 pp., $22.95)

In his introduction to Andrei Voznesensky's new book, William Jay Smith complains of a "vicious attack" on the poet by Clive James, published more than eight years ago, and continues:

> Just as vicious have been attacks from Russian émigré writers once closely associated with the poet and others whose departures from the Soviet Union were somewhat less heroic than they would have us believe. In their understandable bitterness at being themselves cut off from their native country and their native language, they appear to resent any writer left behind. They object to Voznesensky's enjoying benefits, as a member of the Writers' Union, which they themselves enjoyed.

Since I am going to launch one more vicious attack on Andrei Voznesensky, let me clarify some things from the very outset. First, I am not a Russian émigré writer. I am a Lithuanian émigré writer, though I happen to specialize in Russian literature. Second, I have never been closely associated with the poet. To be precise, I have met him on two occasions, once in Vilnius, once in New Haven. Third, I have never enjoyed the benefits of membership in the Soviet Writers' Union for the simple reason that I have never belonged to it. Finally, I do not resent any writer left behind. Quite the reverse, I value many of them highly, such as Aleksandr Kushner, Fazil Iskander, and Marcelijus Martinaitis. (The question of their belonging or not belonging to the Writers' Union is of secondary importance.) Also, I do not think that my departure from the Soviet Union in 1977 was heroic, though I maintain that it was difficult enough.

Now let me proceed to the heart of the matter. In the Soviet Union, people distinguish among three kinds of literature: *gosizdat*, *samizdat*, and *tamizdat*. The difference consists in the means of publication and distribution. *Gosizdat* is the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output of the state publishing houses. *Samizdat* makes the rounds of narrow circles of readers in the form of frayed typescripts. *Tamizdat* are books on Soviet topics, printed in Paris, New York, and similarly God-forsaken places, usually received on an overnight loan from a close friend. The two latter categories are dangerous, without necessarily exceeding the first category in quality. There are some very good books in *gosizdat*, though the better ones remain virtually unavailable because of the great demand and the less than modest supply. And, of course, there are some decidedly bad books in *samizdat* or, even more often, in *tamizdat*.

Andrei Voznesensky was, and still is, a *gosizdat* author, one of those very much in demand. But he has often teetered on the brink of *samizdat* and *tamizdat*. Thus, in 1979, he contributed several of his poems to the unofficial publishing venture *Metropol*. To tell the truth, they did not differ too much from his poems printed officially, and appeared almost simultaneously in his next *gosizdat* collection. *An Arrow in the Wall* is one of Voznesensky's *tamizdat* ventures. It contains, among others, a poem dedicated to the well-known émigré writer Vassily Aksyonov. In the Soviet Union, this poem could not be printed with its dedication, at least not at the time of this writing; and some comments appended to the new book would also be unimaginable in the Soviet press. This aura of careful and calculated challenge has surrounded Voznesensky's poetic and civic enterprises for many, many years—as a matter of fact, from the very beginning of his career.

I DO NOT doubt that the best *gosizdat*, *samizdat*, and *tamizdat* authors do one and the same job: they expand the limits of cultural (and not only cultural) freedoms in the Soviet Union. One cannot overstate the importance of their work, not only for their country but for mankind in general. I would add that Voznesensky himself, especially in his early years, has also contributed to that process. He is a poet of talent. In any case, he possesses the gift of verbal tricks, of wordplay, of brash imagery; no less an authority than W. H. Auden was struck by his craftsmanship. Voznesensky's "Goya" ("I Am Goya," in the English version) was a revelation in 1960, and it is still a powerful poem. I will not conceal the fact that I was moved by two other poems included in the new collection too: "Saga" (the hidden topic of which is emigration), and "Elegy for My Mother." But Voznesensky is a poet who has paid too high a price, unfortunately, for his success in the Soviet Union.

HE STARTED as Pasternak's pupil. At least he used to visit the elder poet, who was supposedly fond of his work (a circumstance we know mainly from Voznesensky himself). His first collection, *Mosaic*, appeared in 1960, the year Pasternak died. It was followed by *Parabola* and, in 1962, by *The Triangular Pear*, written after a three-week stint in the United States, a rare occurrence for a Soviet poet in those days. All these collections, especially the third one, became overnight successes. Many factors contributed to their popularity, including attacks by several critics belonging to the Soviet "moral majority," which became somewhat less fashionable at precisely that time, even in government circles. Moreover, Voznesensky wrote about America, the secret dream of so many members of the Soviet elite (and not only of the elite). He virtually choked with enthusiasm when he alluded to America's prosperity and enumerated American fads of the early '60s.

Of course there were also poems called "lightning rods," in the parlance of the Soviet literary establishment: a dithyramb to a sequoia tree named after Lenin, and an attack on the ubiquitous agents of the FBI (or was it some other institution?). Then, in March 1963, Voznesensky, together with several of his colleagues, was selected by Khrushchev for a personal reprimand: he was accused of formalism, nihilism, pornography, and so on. That was undoubtedly a shattering experience. Stalin's methods of dealing with writers were still in everybody's memory. But one has to admit that Voznesensky made the best of his ordeal. He steered toward conformism, yet he managed to achieve the special sort of prestige belonging to nonconformist and persecuted writers.

William Jay Smith is wrong when he states that "for a long time afterward Voznesensky was not allowed to publish anything, and he wandered about like a fugitive." In November of that same year, 1963, Voznesensky published a long and bad poem called "Longjumeau," about Lenin and the Marxist school he established before the revolution in a suburb of Paris. It was an obvious case of groveling, although not everybody in the East, and virtually nobody in the West, noticed it. From that time on, Voznesensky never encountered any serious problems. He wrote and published dozens of books, and retained his status as a comfortable rebel. In 1966 he was nominated for the Lenin Prize, and in 1978 he received the State (formerly the Stalin) Literary Prize.

Together with Yevgeny Yevtushenko (a more prolific, and arguably a less gifted, writer), Voznesensky became a member of a well-known tandem of oppositionists enjoying privileges reserved only for the higher echelons of the *nomenklatura*. One of the main privileges was the opportunity to spend a good part of time abroad, to represent the diversity and the boldness of Soviet culture under the wise guidance of the Politburo. Both writers proved unusually gifted in the noble art of cultivating connections, and of self-promotion.

I WOULD PREFER not to blame them for it; connections and self-promotion are a part of almost any writer's life. But the position of Yevtushenko and Voznesensky became ambiguous, to say the least, when other, less calculating and less known oppositionist writers—Yury Galanskov, Irina Ratushinskaya, Rostislav Yevdokimov, Vasyl Stus—found themselves in prisons, or simply vanished without trace. A temporary ban on foreign travel for Voznesensky created more commotion in the West than the very real plight of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn and Joseph Brodsky. In my opinion, and not only in my opinion, it was a sad and shameful spectacle.

Of course Yevtushenko and Voznesensky were—and, to a degree, still are—genuinely popular in their own country. Many thousands of copies of their books are sold overnight. Their poetry readings may still pack auditoriums, although the crowds may be somewhat thinner than they were in the '60s. Voznesensky's rock opera *Yunona and Avos*, staged in 1981, was the talk of the town in Moscow for many months. But they have lost—they lost long ago—the love of that part of the young Soviet generation that really matters. The best and the brightest have chosen not the aging tandem, but Brodsky and Kushner. The poetry of Yevtushenko and Voznesensky has become more a social curiosity than an artistic phenomenon. People often compare their popularity to the popularity of American rock stars (perhaps they are helped by the fact that there is an obvious lack of good rock in the Soviet Union). I would suggest another com-

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parison: they look more and more like American TV preachers.

An Arrow in the Wall is a bilingual retrospective of Voznesensky's poetry from the early '60s to the present. Two prose pieces—part memoir, part fiction—make up the final part of the book. The translations are by many good and/or famous poets in the English language, including W. H. Auden, Richard Wilbur, Stanley Kunitz, Allen Ginsberg, Lawrence Ferlinghetti. Some of the translations, especially Auden's and Wilbur's, are impressive (perhaps more impressive than the originals). Some are not; one can find not only wrong renditions, unwarranted changes of intonation and of imagery, but also several rather funny lapses. "*Ruchka*" does mean "pen," but the slang idiom "*doshel do ruchki*" does not mean "taking up my pen"; it means "I am done for." The grade "2" in Russian schools does not correspond to the American "B"; it corresponds to "F," which the translator, F. D. Reeve, unfortunately also earns here. "*Khren*" is indeed horseradish, but at the same time, by a sound association, it is used as a euphemism for "penis": thus "*khrenovo*" means not "horseradish," but something like "oh, fuck." But these are minor criticisms. The major criticism is much more discomforting: most of the translations, including the best ones, look like a waste of talent, effort, and time.

I HAVE already said that Voznesensky is a gifted poet. His verses, especially of the early period, are not deprived of energy, tension, and vigor; they remind one of Mayakovsky, and sometimes even of Tsvetaeva. He introduces dance and jazz rhythms with an evident bravado. He uses Russian slang frowned upon by the authorities, and carefully employs disguised four-letter words even more offensive to their Victorian tastes. His eccentric verbal games are vaguely reminiscent of such Russian Futurists as Velimir Khlebnikov and Aleksei Kruchenykh. He also enjoys shocking metaphors. Let me quote a famous one: an alcoholic lies on his back at 45 below zero Celsius, and "Above his open mouth, blunt as a corkscrew / Sticking up from a penknife, his frozen soul." More often than not, these metaphors and comparisons are of dubious taste: a sea gull is called "God's swimming trunks" (in a one-line poem happily not included in the present collection).

In any event, Voznesensky shows something different from the usual insipid Soviet stuff: a certain roughness, sharp contrasts, dashing rhymes, a sense of humor (though of a rather unsophisticated kind). In the beginning, there was also a good deal of urban and technical imagery, which never failed to impress the young Soviet technical intelligentsia that formed a sort of timid opposition during the post-Stalin period. Later, when tastes changed, Voznesensky turned ecological and Green.

Voznesensky was always eager to introduce something half-forbidden, something not totally accepted, not yet prevailing, in Soviet stylistics. In short, he was eager to become a kind of fashion designer, and sometimes he succeeded in it. One should note not only the political allusions scattered throughout Voznesensky's poems; he also flirted with sexual topics, with Freudian imagery, with religion. He introduced a dose of violence and sadism (common in Soviet daily life, but rarely discussed in public). His subjects include: cruel hunting (a hare or a boar), assassination (Kennedy), suicide (Marilyn Monroe, of course), burying alive (Gogol), execution (in the times of Peter the Great), the corpse of a mother stuffed down the outhouse hole by her own son, a beating of a woman (carefully observed by the poet and described at great length, with many inventive metaphors). All this may have political and moral overtones, but unfortunately it is also reminiscent mainly of a second-rate horror movie.

GRADUALLY, as Voznesensky secured a comfortable niche in Soviet society, his mannerisms became more and more automatized, his images empty and verging on self-parody, his stance of a rebel and a moralist more and more suspect. He chooses easy targets, ritually attacked in all of the Soviet media long before the era of *glasnost*—petty bureaucrats, for example, or his own (not too numerous) critics, whom he scolds with particular delight. He assumes the cozy position of a humanist, a defender of beauty, of true love, of healthy sex, of Lake Baikal, of peaceful coexistence, of Russian icons, of Lenin—you name it.

If some of the things he used to say were meaningful in the first post-Stalin years, the development of Soviet unofficial (perhaps even official) thought has now left him far behind. As the Soviet joke goes, Voznesensky is always the first to step onto a field already cleared of mines. But one should never forget that there were—there are—people in that country who dare to step onto real mine fields. In a moment of sincerity, Voznesensky says: "We lost ourselves through silence—we waited for fair weather. If you hold your tongue today, nothing will be right tomorrow." There he states the truth.

There is nothing worse in art than a philistine pretending to be an antiphilistine. Trying to impress the reader by his boldness and profundity, Voznesensky conveys platitudes, pompously explains the self-evident, and gives moral recipes of the Ann Landers type. A few examples will suffice. "Man lives by sky alone." "If you live—you burn." "We are more than nuts and bolts." "A poet is the most national of creatures, completely involved with his own language, and yet at the same time connected to world culture." The sea is "the bottomless riddle of existence and of history."

There is a virtually untranslatable Russian word, *poshlost*, that means not just banality and triteness, but an aggressive and pretentious sort of banality and triteness. Voznesensky practices the art of *poshlost* more often than not. The purely aesthetic quality of his poetry has decreased considerably. He practices an affected coarseness and a sugary tenderness at the same time, the so-called *style russe*, usually associated with Rasputin and the all-too-popular songs ("In our eyes the wild fires of centuries glow," and so on). A poem dissolves into a series of repetitive couplets, or into a long and boring string of comparisons where all the imagery is being dictated by the mechanical requirements of rhyme.

I would like to give Voznesensky credit for being one of the rare Soviet writers who did not hesitate to write on the Holocaust. Alas, his poems on that subject (including the famous "The Lake") are instances of blatantly bad taste; they trivialize the event to an al-

"IN AUGUST, when the five-year bull market hit its peak (so far), the *Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Times* featured stories on how unimportant stock prices were. Yet when stocks later fell back to merely twice the level that was always considered very high before 'Reagonomics,' that was a different story altogether. Although the previous $2 trillion increase in stock prices meant nothing, retracing half of that gain now meant the world had come to an end."

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most incredible degree. Compare them with the magnificent, bitter, and discreet poems on the Holocaust by Czeslaw Milosz, and you will see the difference between bad poetry and good poetry on a topic that transcends poetry.

Voznesensky's art is the art of the Moscow yuppies, of that hazy world where liberal members of the *nomenklatura* and the not-too-authentic Bohemians easily coexist, sometimes becoming an amalgam of the two. It is not accidental that he has become one of the standard-bearers of *glasnost*. It was he who helped to arrange a recent exhibition of Marc Chagall in Moscow. He also heads the commission whose proclaimed goal is the restoration of Boris Pasternak to his rightful place in Russian letters. These projects are worthwhile, of course, even if Voznesensky's participation has a tinge of show-biz and cheap publicity. I wish him every success. But poetry is a different matter.

In his poetry and in his prose, Voznesensky tells endless stories about his meetings with the greats of our century—Pasternak and Akhmatova, Chagall and Henry Moore, Picasso and Vysotsky, Plisetskaya and Pope John Paul II. These exercises in name-dropping have an easily perceived goal: to present himself as a legitimate heir of all that is best in Russian culture, and in world culture. This is obviously not the case. The legitimate heir of the great tradition is not Voznesensky, but Brodsky. Compared with the authentic Russian poetry that flourished, and continues to flourish, outside his milieu, Voznesensky's poetry is almost nonexistent.

TOMAS VENCLOVA

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THE LOOMING PAST

Dreams and Delusions: The Drama of German History by Fritz Stern

(Knopf, 323 pp., $19.95)

Why Hitler? Where did Germany go wrong? These questions have haunted the historical writing on a country that stands for Heinrich Heine and Heinrich Himmler, Albert Einstein and Adolf Eichmann, *Das Kapital* and *Der Stürmer*, Mendelssohn-Bartholdy's *Gewandhausorchester* in Leipzig and Dr. Mengele's inmate band on the ramp of Auschwitz.

Is there a chain of necessity that extends from Luther through Hegel to the Holocaust? Is there a grand factor, a *Sonderweg* ("separate path") that sets Germany apart, that explains why the fearful upheavals of the 19th and 20th centuries—nationalism and industrialization, war and depression—spawned Churchill and Roosevelt in the Anglo-Saxon world while spewing forth Hitler in Germany? Fritz Stern, himself an early victim of Nazism, does not think so. The "whole course of Germany history," Stern cautions, "should no longer be seen principally from the perspective of 1945." Historians, he warns, should not reason "backward from disaster"; that would impose a false necessity on events, while ignoring the other strands of the story.

Yet even Stern cannot resist the search for a leitmotiv as he moves, essay after essay, through the rubble and the glory of 19th- and 20th-century German history. Nor should he be faulted for forsaking his own counsel: all history is the search for necessity, and in the German case, that question inflicts itself with special urgency even on those who rightly reject the facile "Luther-to-Hitler" interpretation. Immediately after the war, that theory was virtually the coin of the historian's realm—understandably, in view of Auschwitz. Since then, however, the idea of the German *Sonderweg* has lost its hold on the imagination, as historians have burrowed deeper in the record, returning with the not-so-surprising finding that "typically German" features were not so typical after all.

Anti-Semitism, ultranationalism, racism? There was plenty of that in the France of Charles Maurras, Edouard Drumont, and Maurice Barrés too. If the Germans were incurable Romantics, reacting against the message of the Enlightenment with the celebration of the irrational, the *Volk*, and the *Kraftmensch*, what about the French enemies of the Enlightenment, such as De Maistre or Bonald? And in Britain there was Burke, who invoked the claim of an almost mystical community, and an almost Hegelian view of the State, against individualism and liberalism. The Germans had Fichte and Novalis; the British had Coleridge and Carlyle. Hegel found British disciples in T. H. Green and Bernard Bosanquet.

Nor were the shibboleths of 19th-century German nationalism that different from "manifest destiny" and the "White Man's burden," and what Wilhelm II had to say about the German mission was hardly strange to a Teddy Roosevelt or Rudyard Kipling. "Alienation" may have been invented by Karl Marx, but Gustave Le Bon and Emile Durkheim did not need *Das Kapital* to understand what urbanization and industrialization were doing to the traditional ligaments of all European societies. The cycles of boom-and-bust left their victims strewn all over Europe, and World War I was strictly nationality-blind as it wiped out entire generations of Europe's "best and brightest."

And yet it is precisely these similarities that dramatize the original question, the "nagging question" that finally forces Stern, willy-nilly, to reason "backward from disaster." "Two historic developments," he writes in his central essay, "Germany 1933: Fifty Years Later," seem "to have had a special bearing on the vulnerability of Germans to National Socialism." Both were rooted not in economics or politics, but in the "cultural context" that shapes "people's sentiments and habits." One was the failure of German Protestantism to develop a workable answer to secularization, to the "unchristening of Europe" in the 19th century, as C. S. Lewis has called it. The other was the "manner by which [the Germans] acquired their political education."

These are two fresh answers to an old question. But given the natural constraints of an essayistic approach, Stern merely limns the explanation, which could have profited from a few side steps into comparative analysis. (Why was there no similar failure on the part of American and British Protestantism?) In Germany, according to Stern, there was a "serious estrangement between the Protestant Church and people." Instead of ministering to the urban and recently uprooted poor, the Lutheran clergy remained "unservingly conservative," exalting "king, nation, *Volk*." It gave unto the state what it demanded: "ven-

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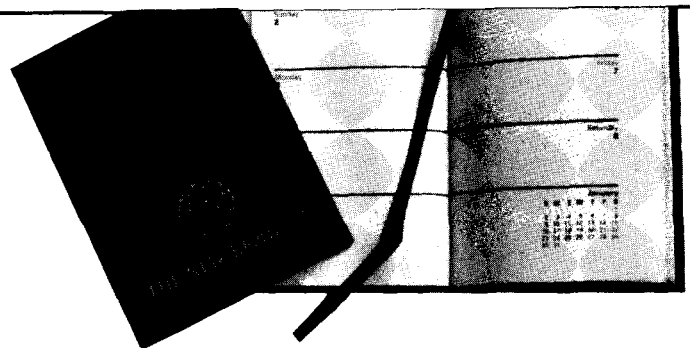
eration, sacrifice, and service," for "good Christians had to be faithful servants of the nation."

The bill came due after the defeat of 1918, when suddenly the old alliance between throne and altar was severed. "The altar was left unprotected in a hostile world," and German Protestants came to identify with the "humiliation and degradation of the nation," finding in Weimar "an uncongenial and threatening culture." Instead of the Lutheran pathos of obedience to the state, there was at best only "aloofness and resentments," robbing a frail democracy of desperately needed spiritual support. Nor was there any civic support to draw on. The Depression sharpened ancient class conflicts while disaster after disaster, denying any respite, left room only for delusion and paranoia. "Political education and the urgent need for civic rationality," Stern writes,"came at a time of organized mendacity and pervasive hatreds." Thus "the Germans learned about the centrality of politics . . . in a distorted and divisive manner."

Into that void of rationality and faith stepped, as if made to order by a satanic God, the pseudo-Messianic figure of Hitler. His "rhetoric was religious; he dissolved politics in a religious aura." Leni Riefenstahl perfectly captured (and manipulated) that myth: the Führer promised deliverance, rebirth, and salvation, and he did so, though viscerally anti-Christian, in the name of Divine Providence.

AS STERN himself admits in a subsequent essay ("National Socialism as Temptation"), Nazism as "disguised religion," as totalitarian ersatz church, is an old—and one should add, instructive—story. Yet the Great Question must be posed once again. If secularization and the inchoate revolt against capitalism, materialism, and liberalism had engulfed all of Europe, why that peculiar German rebellion against the West and modernity, why that "great tendency of the Germans [to go] against the Enlightenment," as Nietzsche had pointed out long before?

The "Drama of German History" surely does proceed along the way stations of Christianity lost and political education postponed. Yet there is more to the story, more that is political rather than cultural. Amid all the analogues and similarities, one central factor seems to distinguish Germany from the rest: the imposition of "modernity" (by which we conveniently lump togeth-



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er liberalism, enlightenment, capitalism, and nationalism) *from without* on a people that discovered and rediscovered its nationhood in the struggle against foreigners. Perhaps the French, British, and Americans were just luckier. These nations had fought and won their revolutions at home. The Germans, by contrast, had theirs imported on the bayonets of Napoleon's armies, and were forced to accept democracy-as-defeat once more a hundred years later.

FOR THE WEST, democracy and nationalism were two sides of the same coin; indeed, it is hard to think about French or American nationalism without its driving (and civilizing) spirit, the democratic ideal. For the Germans, however, nationalism was a reaction against the giver and the gift, against the purveyor and the product of modernity. The very process of nation-building was a revolt against the West and the alien new faith of the victors. A sense of repeated victimization imbued German nationalism with that peculiar virulence that demanded the individual's submission to the *Volk* and the obedience of both to an all-powerful state.

What Napoleon unwittingly started, Bismarck completed, in yet another war against the French in 1870-71: the fusion of a crazy-quilt pattern of kingdoms, cities, and principalities into a single Reich. Note that union was accomplished in the name of "blood and iron," not behind the *tricolore* of republicanism, liberalism, and democracy. In 1870-71 Napoleon's heirs were at last brought to heel. But another, more fearful enemy remained within the gates. Its name was "modernity," and it wreaked havoc on a world of unchanging order and encapsulated communities suddenly battered into a nation. Working through the "hidden hand" of the market (actually, through the strong fist of the state), gobbling up the small shopkeeper's livelihood, driving the peasant off his land and the cobbler off his bench, the enemy within eluded eye and grasp. But there *was* somebody made out of flesh and blood. Was there a more visible symbol of alienness and "rootless" modernity in the new Reich than the Jew? Vulnerable as always, the Jews were suddenly unshackled from their marginality, as the new faith of emancipation and universal rights intruded from across the Rhine.

Stern is absolutely right in devoting so much attention to the so-called "German-Jewish symbiosis." (There are three essays that deal directly with the issues, "Einstein's Germany," "Fritz Haber: The Scientist in Power and in Exile," and "The Burden of Success: Reflections on German Jewry.") That symbiosis had its moments of greatness, but it ended in martyrdom. The history of German Jewry is such a crucial part of the plot because it is "one of the most dramatic instances of Europe's encounter with what we commonly call modernity, the uprooting of society in a spiritual, social, and economic sense." In their march out of the ghetto, Jews attained unique prominence, even virtual dominance, in banking, journalism, and the sciences. As Stern puts it, here was "one of the most spectacular social leaps in European history," and, one should add, a burst of achievement the world had not seen since the half century that was Athens's gift to Western civilization.

Yet emancipation would ultimately end in extinction. Was not the Jew the very symbol (if not agent) of everything that was turning German society upside down? Other nations have fought their battles with modernity too, but nowhere was that encounter compressed into such a short space of time and saddled with so many handicaps. In the authoritarian Bismarck empire, Saxons, Bavarians, and Prussians became Germans rather than citizens; victims of telescoped economic change, they held few of those political prerogatives that, in the West, gave people a sense of mastery over their own fate.

INDEED, there is a reason why Germans learned too late, and then in the worst way, about the "centrality of politics." As a nation, the Germans arrived in the great-power game at a point when the chips were already well distributed. Plunked down in the middle of Europe, they were bound to threaten all the established players, and to be threatened, in turn, by them. The timing helps to explain why the economic revolution did not unleash a political one, why the new industrialists and the old aristocrats, the "iron-rye cartel," could so easily curb democracy in the name of the *Primat der Aussenpolitik* (the "primacy of foreign policy"): in a threatening world, discipline, duty, and fatherland had to precede freedom, and domestic debate—the name of the democratic game—would only give comfort to the enemy.

Nationalism was the cement that held it all together, that wondrous "political good" whose supply never wanes and that bestows psychic equality, the heady sense of "we against them," on rich and poor, on masters and servants alike. But not on the Jews, no matter how desperately they tried to assimilate. "Cosmopolitan" and "rootless," the Jews made a perfect target; the enemy within mirrored the enemy without. And when the real enemy won, as he did in 1918, robbing the Germans of their rightful "place in the sun," the pariahs of the world turned against the pariahs at home. But even then, Stern writes:

> There was no single road that led to Auschwitz. What the National Socialists aimed at was the total repudiation of emancipation and the extrusion of Jews from German life. They proceeded slowly, by design and improvisation; what emboldened them was the passivity with which the German elites, long nurtured on a kind of presumption against Jewry, observed the elimination of Jewish colleagues and competitors from almost every sphere of activity. [Only in the end] the Nazis ... unleashed their full wrath on European Jewry, made defenseless by Nazi conquest.

WHAT ARE WE to conclude from this drama that ended in annihilation—of European Jewry and of the short-lived German Reich? Stern does not really tell us, and perhaps this is too much to ask from a collection of essays that ranges from "Einstein's Germany" to "Capitalism and the Cultural Historian." In the end, Stern leaves us with an ambivalent message. There was necessity, yes, but there was contingency too. There was, as he writes, "no single road that led to Auschwitz"; yet the grounds had been prepared long ago by what Stern delicately calls "a kind of presumption against Jewry."

Why Germany? Perhaps we will never understand why; perhaps a historian should not even try. Still, in putting his essays and lectures between hard covers, Stern has performed a difficult task superbly. Fusing erudition with elegance, extracting fascinating insights from a wealth of disparate detail, he brilliantly brings to life a Germany that is gone and yet is an enduring nightmare: a land of dazzling achievements and murderous obsession. There are few historians who range as widely and still return with a gift of original scholarship—and fewer even who dare address the great, troubling questions.

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Underwear Update

IT LOOKS TO ME as if we are headed for economic hard times, and that's not based on reading Ravi Batra or keeping track of M-1. It's a close reading of the country's lifestyle reporters, all breathlessly pursuing stories on how to remain stylishly acquisitive without any money. Until a few weeks ago, these same reporters were painstakingly comparing the merits of sushi-making machines and Biedermeier chairs. The current articles run to making a casserole look like a soufflé, organ meats palatable, and a little bit seem like a lot. I'm reminded of the articles my mother used to clip from *Family Circle* on how to disguise a cut-up fryer by pouring a can of mushroom soup over it, adding a cup of sherry, and serving the result on your best wedding china. My favorite appeared in the Sunday *Washington Post* under the headline "FAKING IT: A CRASH COURSE IN ELEGANT BUT INEXPENSIVE ENTERTAINING," and contained this helpful hint on how to entertain elegantly but cheaply: "To create the aura of lobsters without the expense, simply serve your fish dishes on a lobster-motif serving platter, with a lobster-shaped potholder or while wearing a lobster-decorated tie or undershorts." I would rather eat Chicken of the Sea alone than risk a stunt like this. Where's the percentage in taking a group of people, not lobster-averse but with lobster the last thing on their minds as they arrive (at least at my house), and turning them into a bunch of salivating, lobster-obsessed monsters before serving them a nice casserole?

WE SHOULD HAVE KNOWN lifestyle reporting would one day sink to features on men serving cheap fish in lobster-covered underpants. The genre has been wearing thin for a while, especially in our newspaper of record, which has an entire section to fill every week with drivel for the Y-people. Even so, they try to maintain an aura of seriousness, using the same portentous headlines in the Living Section that are used on the op-ed page. Last week's lead article on what to serve at gatherings to watch football games was subtitled "Beyond Chips and Dip." It can only get worse as writers strain for ways to reach that consumer who once thought nothing of dropping $200 on a rowing machine but is now sunk into his couch holding onto a remote control device, too tired and too poor to go out.

I HAD A BIG Life Choice to make last weekend: whether to take a job in New York. So I spent most of the weekend mindlessly at the movies—four in 36 hours. Fortunately, two of the movies were set in New York, which was some help—more than my few trips there each year when I get to know a few offices and Runway Six at LaGuardia. From *Three Men and a Baby* I learned that in New York it takes three high-income males to swing the rent for an apartment on the Upper West Side and to do what most mothers do alone. Like Dustin Hoffman, who bonded with his son after learning what grade he was in only to have Meryl Streep return and reclaim him, the three men get attached to Mary only to have Mom return and take custody. Think of this as "Kramer vs. Kramer, Kramer & Kramer." *Wall Street* was even less illuminating. Most of the movie is talk, and most of the talking is done by men on the phone. One man shouts into the phone; another shouts back into the phone; when the tension really mounts, whole roomfuls of men shout into the phone. It's not at all encouraging about Manhattan. It suggests that if you want to move out of a dark, one-room apartment in a questionable neighborhood, you have to sell your soul and your father to a greed-besotted investment banker who shouts into the phone even when he's on the beach. Then there are the masses of people yearning to get from A to B but having difficulty. The scene where Bud Fox is tailing the English takeover specialist in the lift suggests that if the city gets any more crowded, people will soon be forced to book space on elevators during peak travel periods. Women don't have much to say in this movie, perhaps because they don't carry cellular phones. It's just as well; Daryl Hannah barely made it as the spacey stargazer in *Roxanne*. She's been out of her depth since she took the fin off.

"BROADCAST NEWS" had more to say about New York, even though it's set in Washington. Network news people remain New Yorkers even when posted here, running at 78 rpm to our 45. They live in apartments, turn on their stoves only for warmth, and insist on meeting friends at alien, Manhattan-type restaurants serving hostile food in small portions. If only Washington, where kids can go to school without a .38-caliber pistol and the subway is safe, were filled with the likes of Albert Brooks.

AS ALWAYS, sitting in the dark among strangers in a seat lousy with popcorn and Coke only feeds decision gridlock. Perhaps I could steal a scene from Woody Allen in *Annie Hall* and buttonhole strangers on the street, to see what they think. I ran into some New Yorkers waiting to get into the theater. They said not to do it, even if I get dental.

POLLS SHOW THAT Gary Hart's high negatives are coming from women. A lot of men attribute this to single-issue politics: that women won't vote for him simply because he had an affair. I suspect that the men shouting about this at dinner tables are talking with their glands; that they are trying to settle once and for all their right to have an affair and still run for president. We'll soon find out, but I don't think all this noise is going to translate into pulling the Hart lever in the secrecy of the voting booth. As for women, I don't think we eliminate men as friends or candidates because of an affair. Hart's affair was an event that exposed Hart in a way few candidates ever are. He couldn't rehearse his reaction and turn it into a sanitized sound bite for the evening news. He had to go naked into the bright lights, without the shroud of position papers and new ideas, and he was revealed as embittered, arrogant, hollow, a first-class jerk. It's also been said that criticizing Hart for lying is just a cover for criticizing him for adultery; that his lies were trivial—why he wasn't home at night, his name, and his age—compared with the lies of Nixon and Bush about what country was being bombed and whether arms for hostages was a good idea. Be fair. Give Hart a chance. He just hasn't had the opportunity to lie about affairs of state yet.

M. B. C.

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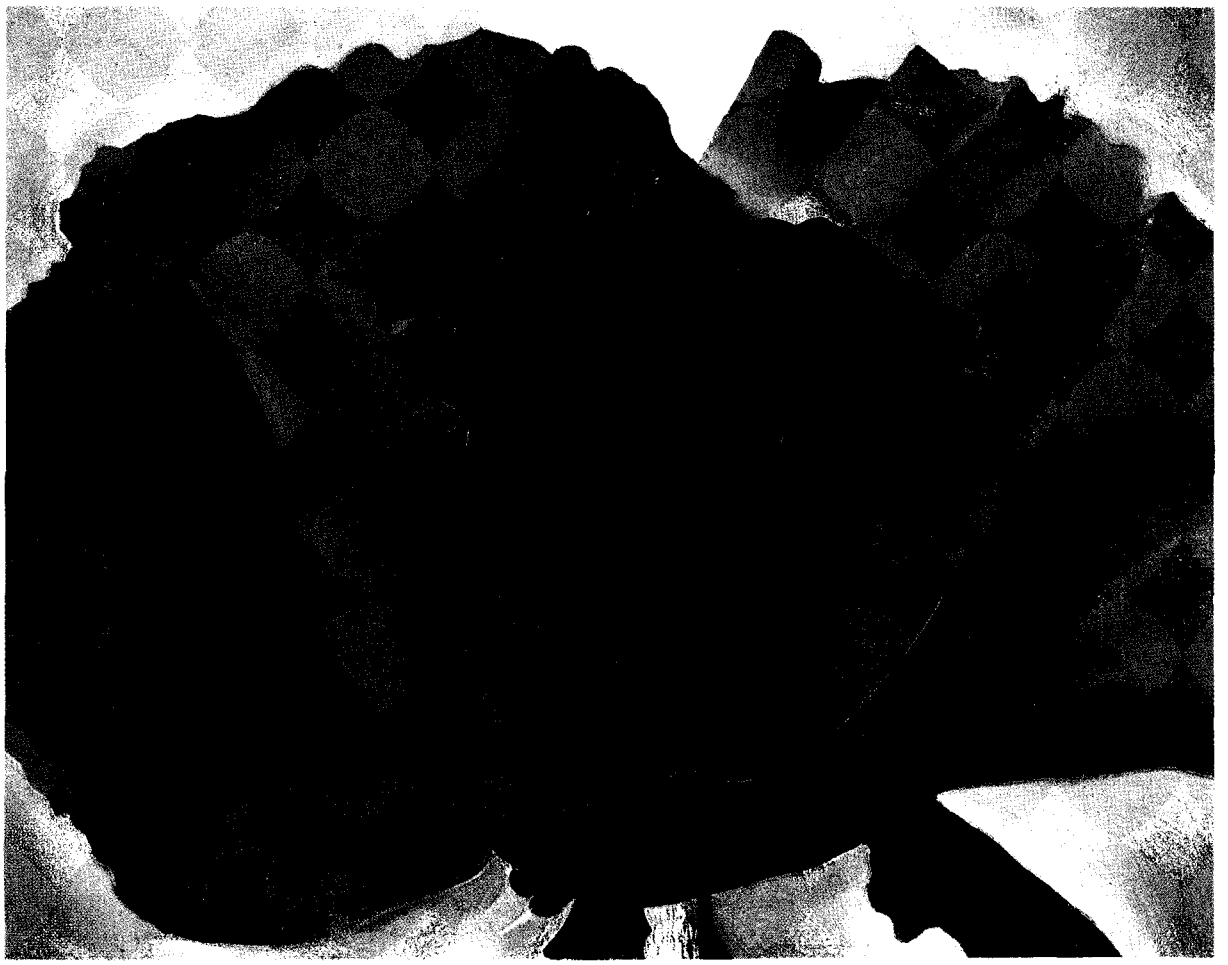
"Still–in a way–nobody sees a flower–really–
it is so small–we haven't time–
and to see takes time, like to have a friend takes time."
—Georgia O'Keeffe



Red Poppy, 1927 *Oil on canvas 7" × 9", Private collection, Geneva*

Photography by Malcolm Varon

GEORGIA O'KEEFFE 1887-1986

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An exhibition organized by the National Gallery of Art and made possible by a grant from Southwestern Bell Foundation.

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